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CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHIES
THROUGH EIGHTEEN CENTURIES

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CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHIES " THROUGH EIGHTEEN CENTURIES

COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

BY

REV. FRANCIS ST. JOHN THACKERAY,
M.A., F.S.A.
VICAR OF MAPLEDURHAM

"As the highest Gospel was a Biography, so is the Life of every good man still an indubitable Gospel."—CARLYLE.

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TO
MY DAUGHTER
ADA BEATRICE

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PREFACE

A GLANCE at the contents and compass of this volume will at once show that it is not intended for the learned scholar. It does not profess to be a contribution to historical study; it does not lay claim to originality. It is in a very large measure a compilation. Nor, again, does it deal with controversial subjects; only slightly and where necessary does it touch dogmatic theology. Where so much has already been written on the subject, it may naturally be asked what room there is for anything additional? Its aim is to bring the knowledge of much Christian Biography within the reach of ordinary Englishmen. Such a work as *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 1810, by Christopher Wordsworth, brother of the poet, published nearly a hundred years ago, in four bulky volumes, no doubt traverses much of the same ground, but the readers it had in view were students, and in other obvious ways it offers points of contrast rather than of comparison with the present volume. It is hoped that by such a collection of lives as the present, following all down the centuries the course of Christ's Church, the result of much solid learning may be available for many Christian homes—for those to whom the literary sources of these lives may not be easily accessible, and who may not have the leisure to study, or the means to purchase, the valuable works on which it is based.

My thanks are due to the S.P.C.K. for what I have borrowed from *The Heathen World of St. Paul*, and

to the Rev. Gerald S. Davies for his permission to incorporate part of *St. Paul in Greece*; to Messrs. Black for my use of their *Lives of the Fathers*, by the late Dean Farrar; to the Rev. Arthur Carr for consenting kindly to allow the incorporation of some parts of his work on the Church and the Roman Empire, and to Messrs. Longman for their permission to make the extracts. I have appended references to these passages and to other sources to which I have been indebted in the different sections. And here may I crave forgiveness if in consulting many books, and dealing with so large a number of authorities as has been necessary, there has occurred through inadvertence any failure to make the due reference or to verify a quotation?

Not all the biographies given are of the same length, the development and continuity of some Christian lives requiring fuller setting forth than that of others, while the addition of a brief statement of the historical environment was in some cases necessary. And if some illustrious names, such as Savonarola and St. Louis, Richard Baxter and John Bunyan, Nicolas Ferrers, Bishop Ken, Bishop Wilson and Bishop Burnet, have been omitted, it is not from any want of interest in their respective characters, but because they seemed, on the whole, to represent smaller movements.

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First Century

A. D.

St. Paul, date of Martyrdom according to Ramsay 67

Second Century

Ignatius martyred	...	...	...	...	...	115
Polycarp	...	...	...	...	...	? 155
M. Aurelius, Emperor...	...	...	...	...	...	160-180

Fourth and Fifth Centuries

Jerome	...	...	...	...	...	346-420
Augustine	...	...	...	...	...	354-430
Athanasius	...	...	...	...	...	326-373
Chrysostom	...	...	...	...	...	347-407

Sixth Century

Columba	...	...	...	...	...	521-597
Columban	...	...	...	...	...	543-615

Seventh and Eighth Centuries

Winfrid (St. Boniface)	680-755
Bede	672-735

Eighth and Ninth Centuries

Karl (Charlemagne)	742-814
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Ninth Century

Alfred	849-901
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Tenth Century

Gerbert (Pope Silvester II)	obit 1003
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Eleventh Century

Anselm	1033-1109
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

<i>Twelfth Century</i>							A. D.
St. Bernard	1091-1153
<i>Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries</i>							
St. Francis of Assisi	...	...	...	...	...	...	1182-1286
<i>Fourteenth Century</i>							
Tauler	...	...	...	...	...	...	1294-1361
<i>Theologia Germanica</i>	written probably about	...	...	...	...	...	1350
Wiclif	...	...	...	...	...	...	1328-1384
Langland (<i>Piers Plowman's Vision</i>)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1362
Chaucer	...	...	...	...	...	...	1328-1400
<i>Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries</i>							
Thomas à Kempis	...	...	...	...	...	...	1380-1471
<i>Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries</i>							
Erasmus	...	...	...	...	...	...	1467-1536
Tyndal	...	...	...	...	...	...	1484-1536
Luther	...	...	...	...	...	...	1483-1546
<i>Sixteenth Century</i>							
Cranmer	...	...	...	...	...	...	1489-1556
Xavier	...	...	...	...	...	...	1506-1552
Hooker	...	...	...	...	...	...	1553-1600
<i>Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i>							
St. Francis de Sales	...	...	...	...	...	...	1567-1622
Andrewes	...	...	...	...	...	...	1555-1626
Laud	...	...	...	...	...	...	1573-1645
<i>Seventeenth Century</i>							
Jeremy Taylor	...	...	...	...	...	...	1613-1667
Pascal	...	...	...	...	...	...	1623-1662
<i>Eighteenth Century</i>							
William Law	...	...	...	...	...	...	1686-1761
John Wesley	...	...	...	...	...	...	1703-1791
John Howard	...	...	...	...	...	...	1726-1790
William Wilberforce	...	...	...	...	...	...	1759-1833

CHRISTIAN BIOGRAPHIES THROUGH EIGHTEEN CENTURIES

PART I

ST. PAUL

SECTION I

INTRODUCTORY

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."—Romans i. 1.

THE object of this brief sketch is to set forth the main features of the *life* of St. Paul, the chief *steps* in his career, the principal *places* that he visited—to follow the order of his work, so that it may present itself before us as a whole.

He was the *servant of Jesus*. That expresses his entire devotion to his Master. It is not so much the Greek idea of slave that it marks. It is rather the Hebrew notion that we are to look to. In the Old Testament "servant of God" is applied to those who are specially called to God's service, and it is given pre-eminently to the "Messiah" Himself.

He was an *Apostle* in the full and proper sense (having himself received a special revelation of the Resurrection), not self-appointed, nor of man's choosing, but called and sent by Christ Himself.

And thirdly, he was "*separated—set apart* unto the gospel of God."

We may call him the Apostle of *Progress*. It is

hardly possible to exaggerate the vast importance of the services that he rendered to the Christian religion. He laboured more abundantly than the other Apostles to give new life to a weary and worn-out world. Look at his Epistles, those earliest utterances of *Christian* literature. Look at his undaunted determination to set religion free from the yoke to which it was enslaved, for Judaism was "the cradle of the gospel, and Judaism very nearly became its *grave*."¹ Look at the clearness with which he taught the justification by faith, which springs from the mystic union of the soul with Christ. Look at the way in which he has brought home to numberless Christians of all ages their own helplessness, and yet at the same time their blessedness, their lofty hopes in the redemption wrought for them by Christ.

He had a vast ideal before him, and how much of it he carried out! Not that he never fell short of his own ideal. It is not a sinless example that we contemplate in Paul; but the life of one who in deepest sincerity calls himself "*the chief of sinners*." We remember how, when provoked on one occasion, he was betrayed into a hasty retort, though he immediately recovered himself and apologized. He shows us in this that we have but *One perfect* example. And so "when we mark in a struggling soul the triumph of the grace of God, when we see a man weak like ourselves, tempted like ourselves, erring like ourselves, enabled, by the force of a sacred purpose, to conquer temptation, to trample on selfishness, to rear even upon sins and failures the superstructure of a great and holy life,"² is not that one of the most precious and most important lessons we can learn? Is not that life and that character a most profitable study?

¹ *Saul of Tarsus*, ch. i.

² Farrar, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ch. i.

SECTION II

ST. PAUL AT TARSUS

"A citizen of no mean city."—Acts xxi. v. 39.

BESIDES a few scattered traditions, we derive St. Paul's history entirely from the Acts of the Apostles and from his own Epistles. It is a broken record, because neither of them professes to give us a continuous narrative. Roughly speaking, the life is known to us at intervals of its central and later period only between the years 36 A.D. and 66 A.D. In II. Cor. xi. there is a long catalogue of sufferings and dangers and outrages. Of that long list of perils there are eleven that are not once mentioned or alluded to in the Acts. How much, then, might have been added to the narrative! But the best biographies are not always the *longest* ones. And we may be sure we have in St. Luke a faithful chronicler of his friend Paul; while in the Epistles we can read the heart of the Apostle to its inmost depths.

We cannot say exactly what was the date of either the birth or death of the Apostle to the Gentiles; but it would seem that he was born in the same decade as our Lord Himself. When he is first mentioned at St. Stephen's martyrdom, he is called a young man, and when he wrote the Epistle to Philemon, he calls himself Paul the aged. At the death of Stephen, St. Paul, we know, was entrusted with a most important mission, and was probably a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin; if so, he must then have been a man of thirty. When he wrote that Epistle, less than thirty years later, he might well have felt himself an old and worn-out man, after all he had gone through, though he would be hardly sixty.

"*A citizen of no mean city.*" Saul, to call him by

his Jewish name, was born at, and passed his earliest years in, the capital of a Roman province—*Tarsus in Cilicia*. Tarsus under the Romans was *no mean city*. First, it was “a free city,” *i. e.* it had the privilege of being governed by its own magistrates; it was exempted from having a Roman garrison. We do not know *how* his father or grandfather obtained the franchise. It may have been purchased; but much more probably it came as a reward for services rendered in the civil wars. He constantly claims the purest *Jewish descent*.

From his constant allusion to Jewish customs, Jewish laws, Jewish festivals, and from many other facts, it is clear that he was a Hebrew.¹ It was by speaking to them in the Hebrew tongue that he quieted the Jews in his speech on the stairs; and he was trained to read the Scriptures in their original language. Yet at the same time he was a Hellenist. The language of his infancy was the idiom of the Grecian Jews, all his letters were written in it, and by far the larger number of the quotations from the Old Testament are taken from the Septuagint or Greek Version. Thus we see there were several influences under which St. Paul grew up. There was a *Greek*, and a *Roman*, and a *Jewish* element in his character. Hence no doubt in part the wonderful versatility by which he could and did adapt himself to different societies.

His birth at Tarsus decided the trade of tent-making, by which the Apostle earned his daily bread, for the staple manufacture of the place was the weaving into ropes and then into tent-covers and garments, the goats'-hair of the flocks of Mount Taurus. This learning of some trade was enjoined on the parents of every Jewish boy. He tells us himself that he would not be a burden to his converts. His parents had provided him with a liberal education. At

¹ He calls himself “an Hebrew of the Hebrews.”

Tarsus, as a seat of culture and learning, Paul had opportunities both for religious thought and for Greek study. Among his contemporaries at Tarsus was the geographer Strabo, who tells us that the city was classed with Athens and Alexandria as one of the three centres of Greek thought and knowledge. It was a home of Stoicism. It had produced a famous poet Aratus, from whom St. Paul quoted at Athens the words, "*We, too, are his offspring.*"

Barnabas almost certainly would be sent from his home in the neighbouring isle of Cyprus, to what might be called the University of Tarsus. If so, they read the same books and cherished the same hopes.

And again, *St. Luke* may very likely have come here, for Tarsus was famous for its school of physicians, and *St. Luke*, who was connected with Antioch, would naturally be drawn to Cilicia.

Thus we see that Paul *was a citizen of no mean city.*

"He was a responsible individual, spirit, soul and body, with all the weakness, trials, sorrows and afflictions that we have." "If he was a Paul, he also was a man."¹ And what was the secret of his strength? It was, "*I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*"

SECTION III

UNDER GAMALIEL AND UP TO THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. STEPHEN

THE Jews, we must remember, were very scrupulous about the education of their children, and though the boyhood of St. Paul was spent in heathen Tarsus, he was probably not allowed to read much of heathen

¹ Chrysostom, quoted by Farrar, and the motto of his *Life and Work of St. Paul.*

authors. Even Plato he would seem not to have known.

But there is another part of St. Paul's education of which we can form a clear idea from what we know of the training every young Jew went through. ¹At the age of five he would begin to study the Bible with his parents, and learn passages by heart. At six he would go to a school; at ten he would be instructed in parts of the *oral* law; at thirteen he would go through something like our Confirmation, and become a "Child of the Law" or a "Son of the Commandment." Thirteen was the age when a Jewish boy, if intended to be a Rabbi, would enter the school of a Master. At this time, probably, Saul was sent from Tarsus to Jerusalem.

The Master with whom he was enrolled was a celebrated one, Gamaliel. He was a favourable specimen of the Pharisee. We remember how he is brought before us in Acts v. as "had in reputation of all the people," and he appears as a man of candour, free from prejudice and of an open mind.

At the feet of this eminent teacher Saul of Tarsus sat, probably for many years. The chief effects of the teaching and example of Gamaliel on St. Paul were probably these—honesty and candour of judgment, and at the same time a keen enthusiasm for the Jewish Law. Also, no doubt he then acquired his profound knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures. He observed all the legal requirements, living before God "with a good conscience." But how far could this take him? When we think of passages in his writings that speak of mere outward observances as futile for inspiring inward peace, we cannot but believe that these years were troubled years. Many hours of mental anguish must Paul have passed, when he felt that he never could do all that the Law required; and yet where else was he to look for help?

¹ Farrar, ch. iii. (abridged).

After his education was completed he must have returned to Tarsus. One strong reason for believing that he did so is this. Where was Saul during our Lord's lifetime, when he would be about twenty-five years of age? If he had been at Jerusalem during Christ's Ministry, can we conceive that he should never have once alluded to it?

St. Paul's connection with the martyrdom of St. Stephen is the first historical notice of him. We cannot doubt that he took a leading part in opposing him from the first. The Synagogue of the Cilicians is named among those who disputed with Stephen: and Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia. What a strange and startling thing it is that Saul could have consented to the death of that saint!—could have been a blasphemer and a persecutor! How, then, could he say that he had lived in "all good conscience towards God and man"?

Even conscience may not be an infallible guide. It may require to be enlightened. Yet even here good was brought out of evil. From the day when St. Stephen "fell asleep," the disciples were scattered everywhere, and so they spread the seeds of the gospel. The famous saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," was in this instance signally true. And thirty years later he who had been the deadliest enemy of Stephen, himself died also a martyr at Rome for the same holy faith.

SECTION IV

ST. PAUL'S CONVERSION

WE next find St. Paul entrusted with a special commission—empowered to go to Damascus and bring any of the new religion bound to Jerusalem.

The distance was about 150 miles, and would take not less than a week to traverse. There is a spot which for centuries has been shown as the scene of the Conversion, with the view of the plain and city of Damascus, about ten miles off. Here on the sixth or seventh day of his journey at midday the great event happened. Suddenly a light gleamed upon him, that could be distinguished even from the blaze of an Eastern noon. Blinded by the glory of that light, he fell prostrate on the ground. And the voice from heaven was heard saying to him, "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . it is hard for thee to kick against the goad.*" The words, which he never could forget, were uttered in the Hebrew tongue, or the Aramaic of the time. At that awful moment Saul did not recognize the Speaker.

"*Who art Thou, Lord?*" he said, and the answer came—

"*I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.*"

God had found him. Jesus had spoken to him. The place whereon he lay was holy ground.

And what were the first-fruits of this Conversion? Three words will tell us: "*Behold he prayeth.*" Had Saul of Tarsus never, then, bent his knees in prayer? If this were so, how could he say he had *lived in all good conscience before God from his youth up*? We are not to understand that he had never prayed till now.¹ But there were two or three points of difference between this prayer and any prayer which he had uttered before.

First of all, it was the first prayer he had ever breathed with a knowledge of the plague of his own heart. It was the first time that he had seen himself as God saw him; as poor and destitute and miserable and blind. He found when he opened his eyes that he could see nothing. Helpless, stricken, dazed, trembling, we can imagine how wretched he

¹ Abridged from C. T. Vaughan, *Church of the First Days*, vol. ii. pp. 18, 19.

was during those nine or ten miles that remained, along which he was led by the hand, till at last they reached the City Gate. There is an ancient gateway still standing, of Roman work, possibly the very same gateway which St. Paul and his companions entered.¹ There would be a brief delay and inquiry as to the business of the travellers. Then they would pass through the long street, still remaining, and still called *Straight*, until the door of the house of Judas was at length reached.

There, after that critical day, and that tremendous strain on all his faculties, how thankful must the poor exhausted Saul have been to enter in and rest!

During those three days of darkness that followed what thoughts of remorse and anguish must have filled his mind! A whole lifetime must have been lived over again. What he had loved he now must have hated. It must have been a season of acute spiritual suffering. Then comes the mention of Ananias, placed there by God's Providence to be the Evangelist and the Baptizer of the great Apostle St. Paul.

It was the first time that he had ever prayed as a *penitent*, as a man whose self-righteousness was completely overthrown, as one who desires henceforth to *be* nothing, and to *have* nothing, and to *do* nothing, but from God, and with God, and in God.

SECTION V

FROM HIS CONVERSION TO HIS CALL

WE come next to the interval between St. Paul's conversion and his first missionary journey, a period of about ten years, a period of preparation and effort, for it was only by degrees that his position became

¹ G. Rawlinson, *St. Paul in Damascus*, ch. vi.

assured among the Apostles ; God was going to discipline him for his high calling.

If we read the Acts alone we should think that St. Paul instantly plunged into the work of teaching and preaching. But this could hardly have been so. In the Epistle to the Galatians we find the following supplementary record : " When He who called me by His grace was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, immediately I did not communicate with flesh and blood, nor went I up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus."

This sojourn in Arabia, then, is the next event in St. Paul's life to which we come. Two questions arise out of it : (1) What is meant by Arabia ? (2) What was the object of his going there ?

One meaning of the word " Arabia " was to denote a portion of country close to Damascus, another that it is to be understood in its popular sense, as the peninsula containing Mount Sinai. This seems to have been the scene of St. Paul's sojourn. And that will answer the second of our two questions, What was the object of his going there ? The object was, no doubt, retirement and solitude.

How long he stayed in Arabia we do not know ; very likely during much of those three years which he says passed before he visited Jerusalem.

After his return he began to preach in Damascus in the synagogues. The period of seclusion had done much. He returned thoroughly equipped for his Apostleship. Doubtless he had some special revelation imparted to him in his retreat. So much had he learnt there that he was able to confound, *i. e.* refute, the most learned of the Jews in Damascus !

Then came the first of those many persecutions from his own countrymen. They resolved to assassinate him. But Saul became acquainted with the conspiracy. Damascus at the time was under an

Arab chief, Aretas, in dependence under the Romans' power, but practically absolute. He had been gained over by the Jewish authorities. The gates were watched day and night. So the disciples, choosing a favourable moment at night, let him down in a large rope basket, through the window of a house which abutted on the city wall—a humiliating flight, no doubt.

He made his way to Jerusalem. He must have had much shrinking of heart. "He essayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple." But there was one who rescued him from his painful isolation. Barnabas took him by the hand and brought him to the Apostles, explained all that had happened to him, and so cleared away their suspicion. It was probably to him, too, that Saul owed his admission as a guest into Peter's house, where he lodged for a fortnight. The intercourse was full of comfort. But the old fury of the Jews was revived. Once more there was conspiracy against him to cut him off in the opening of his career. Once more he was rescued by the Christians. They brought him down to Cæsarea by sea, and from Cæsarea they sent him on to Tarsus.

There once more we find Paul in the home of his childhood. It is probable that at this time he may have won over to the faith some of his own family, *e.g.* the sister whose son we know afterwards saved his life. In any case it was still a period of preparation.

The next thing we read of him is how "Barnabas went forth to Tarsus to seek Paul, and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch."

That must have been an eventful and a happy day when the two friends again met. Barnabas was able to tell him of something far beyond all that either of them had ventured to hope for; how God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life, how a great multitude at Antioch had been added to the Lord!

There ensues a happy interval of rest, a period of active work. It is thus described to us by St. Luke: "For a whole year they were gathered together with the Church, and taught much people, and the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."

After this the two friends when they had fulfilled their ministration of charity (Acts xi. 27) came back again from Jerusalem to Antioch, and it was there that the solemn call of the two preachers took place after prayer and fasting. "Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

SECTION VI

THE FIRST JOURNEY

"Persecutions and afflictions which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra."—2 Timothy, iii. 11.

It is not proposed to go minutely through St. Paul's missionary journeys. As to the visit to the island of Cyprus, Barnabas was himself a Cypriote, and the ground was already prepared by the preaching of the Word after Stephen's martyrdom. The two Apostles "made a complete tour of the Jewish communities,"¹ but the prominent fact recorded is the discomfiture of the Magician Bar Jesus and the conversion of the proconsul Sergius Paulus.

It is here that St. Luke notes the change of name from the Hebrew Saul to the Roman Paul. Now he comes forward in "a double character as an Oriental teacher, who turns out to be a free-born Roman." He appeals for the first time to the great Roman world as himself a member of that world. It is in Cyprus that "the opening of the door of faith unto

¹ So Sir W. Ramsay in *St. Paul the Traveller* (ch. iv. sec. 1) understands ch. xiii. 6.

the Gentiles" is fully realized. And the importance is marked by this change of name.¹

From Paphos they take ship from the coast of Asia Minor, and the one fact recorded of this part of their journey is that John Mark, their attendant, here left them and returned to Jerusalem. The circumstances seem first to have been explained by Sir W. Ramsay, who connects the incident with the allusion to "the thorn in the flesh." Shortly stated, his explanation is this: Paul had intended to evangelize the districts round Perga, but he had a serious illness, possibly malarian fever, brought on by the enervating climate of Pamphylia. He went straight to the highlands of Antioch for recovery, but this alteration of plans, absolutely necessary though it was, did not meet with the approval of Mark, who returned to Jerusalem. This desertion left a painful impression on St. Paul, but we know that a reconciliation took place.

Ramsay's account of this part of St. Paul's travels illustrates the method of a famous book,² written more than a century ago, to prove the agreement between St. Paul's letters and the history of the Acts. The author showed by comparing the two that if that history be true, *i. e.* if it were indeed a faithful account of things that really happened, then the Letters were really written by St. Paul in the circumstances professed by them. And then, on the other hand, he showed that if the *Letters* were really written by St. Paul, then the *History* of the Acts is substantially true. We will therefore compare what St. Paul records as having happened to him in the three cities, Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, with what we read in the Acts.

The Antioch mentioned in 2 Tim. iii. 11 is not, of course, the capital of Syria. It is the Pisidian Antioch.

At this Antioch the Jews stirred up the devout

¹ Ramsay, ch. iv. sec. 4.

² Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, 1790.

and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them and came unto Iconium.

We thus see what an agreement there is between the History and the Letters—an agreement which has more in it than meets the eye at the first glance.

St. Paul, we see, suffered these persecutions one after another and in the order in which the cities are mentioned in the letter. And the agreement reaches to another circumstance. In the Acts Lystra and Derbe are generally mentioned together. In the Epistle Lystra is mentioned, and not Derbe. And there is a reason for this. For, though St. Paul underwent persecutions in each of the three cities through which he passed to Derbe, *at Derbe itself* he met with none. There is therefore the most exact agreement in the list of the cities given by St. Paul, stopping just where it does.

It was at Pisidian Antioch that St. Paul preached his first sermon of which we have any record.

We turn to what passed at Iconium. Thither they had fled from opposition—opposition provoked by success. Iconium was about ninety miles from Antioch, a long and tedious journey. There the same scene was enacted again. There, as before, persecution followed success. For a long time the Apostles held their ground. "The Lord gave testimony to the word of His grace by signs and wonders." The whole city entered on the one side or the other into the great question. At last a positive assault was made upon the Apostles. They took refuge from the storm in the smaller and ruder towns of the neighbouring district.

Among these towns was Lystra. "A wonderful work of healing had created what we should call a sensation. These two men must be gods in disguise."¹

¹ C. J. Vaughan, *l. c.* (abridged).

The Apostles are horror-struck at the thought. St. Paul's calm appeal had its effect. The act of idolatry was prevented. But here again there is a reaction. Here St. Paul was in actual peril of his life. Here took place what he refers to when he says "*Once was I stoned.*" They dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead. Nevertheless when the disciples had circled round him, with words of tenderness and efforts (no doubt) to restore animation, *he rose up and entered into the city.*

After a night's rest and retirement he went forth the next day with Barnabas to Derbe. From thence they return to Syria and to the other Antioch.

SECTION VII

ST. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

WE pass on to St. Paul's second missionary journey.

The great interest of it to us is that it was the introduction of Christianity into the continent of Europe. It led St. Paul in the course of his travels into Greece. There are four chief cities in Greece, to three of which he afterwards wrote Epistles, and those cities are Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and Corinth.

Of these the three last present the chief types or specimens of Greek life, but no sketch of his life, however brief, could omit Philippi.

We take up the thread of the history at Alexandria Troas, the town immediately facing the European coast. Here it was that in the night the vision of a Macedonian appeared to Paul, with the words, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." It has been thought that this Macedonian was none other than St. Luke himself. However this may be, Troas was undoubtedly the place of the meeting of Paul with Luke. This appears from the change of pronoun in what

follows: "When he had seen the vision immediately *we* sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had summoned *us* to evangelize them."

St. Luke appears to have accompanied St. Paul to Philippi (with which place he was evidently connected), to have rejoined him there seven years afterwards, and after that never again to have parted from him.

Philippi was a very typical European city. It had both Greek and Latin elements. It was the first Greek city in which St. Paul preached. It was also a Roman military colony.

Very humble were the beginnings of the work! "On the sabbath day we went forth outside the city, where prayer was accustomed to be" (or where we supposed there was a place of prayer). Among this little congregation was one woman, Lydia, whose heart the Lord Jesus opened. Others heard, she attended.¹ She was baptized, and her whole household; probably children were in that household.

But soon that house was to be exchanged for a prison. There follows the story of the casting out from a girl of the spirit of divination, which "enabled her (as we should say) to tell fortunes." St. Paul drew down on himself and Silas an angry outcry from her owners. A burst of popular frenzy followed, and an illegal outrage on the part of the magistrates, who scourged them cruelly and cast them into prison.

None can forget what followed, the night of cold and darkness and hunger in that Roman prison. Never² probably had such a scene occurred before in the world's history. The sequel, the great earthquake (not an uncommon event in Greece) rocking the very foundations of the prison and opening its doors; the jailer's terror, how he was on the point of committing suicide (just as Brutus had done at this very Philippi); how Paul bade him do himself no harm; how this rough jailer showed to his prisoners

¹ C. J. Vaughan, *The Church of the First Days*, vol. ii, p. 286 abridged).

² Farrar, *St. Paul*, vol. i, p. 498.

the offices of Christian charity, and received baptism for himself and all his family; all this is told us briefly but most graphically by the pen of St. Luke.

The morning after that night dawned. The magistrates remembered the earthquake, so one manuscript adds to the text of Acts xvi. 35. They were troubled. They had acted illegally. They came in person, after first sending word that the prisoners were to be let go. But on this occasion St. Paul stood upon his rights as a Roman citizen. He would not be sent off secretly or surreptitiously. Let the gospel be honoured! The magistrates had done a cruel wrong! Let the discharge be open!

From the prison they go back to Lydia's house; they comfort the brethren and leave Philippi.

The work was thus ended abruptly, but it was *not a failure*. "The nucleus, the germ was formed of that happy and holy congregation, to which ten years later St. Paul addressed one of the tenderest and most comforting of his Epistles."¹

SECTION VIII

THESSALONICA—ATHENS

APART from what we gather from the Epistles, four chapters of the Acts comprise the narrative of St. Paul's connection with the four cities, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. But how momentous are the contents of those chapters! The scope of this volume permits only a brief summary.

Thessalonica was the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. The town was in a central position for the commerce of the Black Sea and Mediterranean, the Thracian towns, and those of Asia Minor, on the one hand—and the cities of Greece and Italy on the other.

¹ C. J. Vaughan.

There was in such a place and among such inhabitants everything to render it important in the eyes of a teacher of Christianity. There was a good prospect that if the Christian faith took root here, its hold would be deep and permanent. There was, perhaps, a more serious tone of thought prevalent among the bulk of the population than in Corinth or in Athens. The tone of St. Paul's letters distinctly reflects this condition of life and thought in those to whom he was writing. A second characteristic of Thessalonica undoubtedly made it a spot of especial importance as a Christian station, namely, it was a commercial centre. The wharfs and landing-stages which stretched round the bay of Salonica were crowded by a mixed assemblage of sailors of all nations. If amongst a crowd like this a few hearts only could be won, no human foresight could tell of what value it might be to religion. The seed sown in such a society might bear fruits in lands where the Apostle could never hope to go.

And there was a third feature in the society of Thessalonica, which marked it out as an important centre for Christian teaching. I mean the influential Jewish colony which it contained. For in spite of the strong opposition shown by the Jews the Apostles must have regarded the presence of a Jewish community in any place as a circumstance favourable, rather than unfavourable, to their work.

St. Paul reasoned with the Jews out of their own Scriptures. And what was the result? Some of them "were persuaded and attached themselves to Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks (*i.e.* the Gentile proselytes) a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." That even such should be the result of the preaching for a few weeks aroused the jealousy of the Jews, and brought a brutal attack which led to the expulsion of the Evangelists.

The frivolous character of Athenian culture at this time could hardly have been better summed up than in that single verse: "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Athens was living on the memory of the past.

We come to the meeting (one of the most memorable of which the world holds record) between the preacher of Christianity and the professors of the old philosophies. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

We learn from Pliny that at the time of Nero Athens contained over 3,000 public statues, and a very large proportion of them were of consummate beauty and excellence.

Besides the freshness and earnestness of the Apostle's speech, the substance of his teaching must have been of an entirely new character to the Athenians. The assertion of one sole Creator, by whom the whole order of the universe was called into being and governed, was quite an unheard-of thing to them. But when he came to speak to them of the resurrection and of judgment to come, the strangeness of the doctrine startled them.

"Then certain of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him. And some said, What will this babble say? But others said, He seemeth to be a setter-forth of foreign gods, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest to our ears things which have a foreign savour. We desire, therefore, to know what these things might mean."

The choice of a spot on which St. Paul was placed to set forth his doctrine is very significant. Above him as he stood towered the Acropolis, on whose

heights were gathered all that was most honoured and most lovely in the national and religious relics of Athens.

On the platform itself stood the colossal statue of Athena, in bronze, the work of Phidias, and the pride of Athens—her majestic figure visible throughout the city, her gilded spear and helmet a landmark to the sailors even far out upon the Ægean.

From the statue of the goddess herself the eye naturally wanders to her temple, the Parthenon.

A second temple, even more sacred in its associations, stood upon the platform opposite to the Parthenon.

It was within sight of these two temples, the Parthenon and the Erechtheum, that the Apostle uttered his defence of Christianity, of which, spoken where it was, not one word was without meaning. St. Paul's preaching to the outward eye of man, judging of great undertakings merely by their immediate results, may well have been a failure. But though the ancient worship of the gods did not fall till long after St. Paul and all who heard him had passed from the earth, it was to words like his that it owed its final passing.

SECTION IX

CORINTH—EPHESUS

THE next place of interest in St. Paul's life is Corinth, fifty-six miles from Athens. There seems to have been a definite policy and plan in the Apostle's journeys. It was to christianize the Roman Empire, passing along the great highways, guided by the political divisions of the Roman provinces, and concentrating his efforts on the chief towns.¹ He

¹ Lock, *St. Paul, the Master Builder*.

wished to have a few strong centres, from which Christianity could radiate out into the neighbouring countries. In the course of his work three cities stand out most prominently, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

Corinth had from the earliest times been a place of commercial importance. On the west side the harbour of Lechæum opened a way through the Corinthian Gulf to all the trading towns of Italy and the west ; while six miles distant across the Isthmus, the other port of Cenchreæ gave Corinth the command of the eastern seas.

In the splendour of the city and the embellishments of her art, Corinth was in her best day no less remarkable than Athens. It has been called at once the London and the Paris of the first century after Christ.

The prosperity which her commerce brought to her citizens was not without its temptations. Their effects showed themselves first in the proneness to luxury and prodigality which the Corinthians ever exhibited ; and secondly in the debasement of morals and life which followed. The Corinthians were notorious for luxury and for laxity of morals.

The Jews' object at Corinth no doubt was to represent St. Paul, himself a Jew, as a violator or disturber of the peaceful continuance of the Jewish worship ; but their hopes of success must have been founded, not on the strength of their case, but on the hope that Gallio might prove another Pontius Pilate. Their hope was unfounded. They had mistaken the character of the proconsul. Gallio, brother of Seneca, acted with firmness and with justice. He at once perceived the frivolity of the charge ; he was set there to administer Roman law and to preserve public order, and not to be an interpreter of Jewish laws, so he contemptuously dismissed the charge. He has, by a singular misinterpretation of the sense of the whole incident, been held up as a type of an ' in-

different Christian." What he really seems to have been was a just and impartial heathen. And the result was to strengthen St. Paul's position.

There is one special allusion to the circumstances of Corinth which readily occurs to the mind. A few miles east of Corinth, nearer to the port of Cenchreæ, and within a little distance of the sea on that side, lie all that remains of the Greek stadium, or race-course. The winner of a contest received as the reward of his victory no prize of tangible value, which could mar its effect by imparting any suspicion of sordid motives to his self-denial. A prize of perishable pine wreath gathered from the small green pines which still grow freely on the low ground of the Isthmus, was all that was given.

From the games, from which St. Paul borrowed some of his best-known figures, he could draw a lesson of higher self-denial and loftier aim. Whether St. Paul ever witnessed one of the Isthmian contests or not cannot be decided. He must have often witnessed the preparation of those who were to take part in them, and his familiarity with them is made evident throughout the well-known words (1 Cor. ix. 24-28) in which he reminds the Corinthians of the race that is set before them.

This visit of St. Paul to Corinth lasted eighteen months. No doubt the city became the nucleus of other bodies of Christians in S. Greece. And none of the Apostle's letters which remain to us comprise so many lessons of everlasting import as those to the men of Corinth. They contain the Apostle's most distinct utterance of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, and of the resurrection from the dead, and of the character of Christian love.

There is a famous sentence in the first Book of Esdras (iv. 41), "*Great is Truth and mighty above all things.*" The words are often wrongly quoted "*it shall prevail,*" but the correct reading is "*Great is*

Truth, and it prevails." That sentence was signally verified in the sojourn of St. Paul at Ephesus.

After an interval of about four years, since he was in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, and wishing to go there, he does at last visit it. No more representative example of his city work in Asia can be chosen than that done in Ephesus.

"Ephesus was the *third capital and starting-point* of Christianity. At Jerusalem Christianity was born in the cradle of Judaism: Antioch had been the starting-point of the Church of the Gentiles; Ephesus was to witness its full development."¹

Holding then such an important place in the history of our religion, it will be well to try to picture to ourselves something of what Ephesus then was. It lay one mile off the sea, with a most commodious haven. The city stood at the meeting of the great roads to the interior and the East. The air was healthy; the population was enormous. Its markets, with the produce of the known world, have been called the *Vanity Fair* of Asia.

And Ephesus was as famous as it was vast and wealthy. I need not speak of its former history for many centuries. In St. Paul's time it was one of the great cities in the Roman Empire, the residence of the Roman Governor of the Province.

One thing which had given it a wide reputation was the Temple of Diana (better called Artemis), of which Ephesus called herself the Sacristan or Keeper. The right of asylum which that building possessed attracted round it a mass of corruption—a quantity of bad characters—just as Westminster Abbey, by its right of sanctuary, did in the Middle Ages.

This temple ranked as one of the wonders of the Old World. It had *one hundred and twenty-seven* lofty columns, carved with exquisite beauty. The

¹ Farrar, *St. Paul*, ch. xxxi., whence most of what follows is abridged.

drum of one of these massive columns may be seen in the British Museum.

We can imagine what this building must have been to the Ephesians when we know what a fine church or cathedral may be to a town. It was also a great bank of deposit. Inside this temple was what was believed to be "an image that fell down from heaven." It was only an ugly heathen image, though regarded as most sacred. Rude and repulsive to our notions, it was yet the rallying-point of all the superstitions of the city. And it had also a mercantile value, for it supported a trade, and a thriving one—the manufacture of little models of the temple, the "silver shrines" made by the artisans in the employment of Demetrius the silversmith.

Another building at Ephesus was the theatre. Its ruins are "a wreck of immense grandeur." It could have held at least 25,000, if not 30,000 people.

Such was the city in which St. Paul found a new sphere of work. Excepting Rome, it was to be far the most important scene of all his toils.

But in the meantime the work was carried on by two able and zealous preachers, Aquila and Priscilla. They had worked together with the Apostle as tent-makers for two years or more. And soon another highly gifted preacher came to them, the eloquent Jew of Alexandria, Apollos.

Thus three people from the three different continents contributed to the foundation of the Ephesian Church: Aquila from Europe, Apollos from Africa, and Paul from Asia.

The ground had thus been prepared at Ephesus, when St. Paul at last took up his lengthened stay in the city.

The twelve men on whom he laid his hands were the nucleus of the Church that was so mightily to grow there.

We read of his daily work during three months.

His own hands ministered to his necessities and to those of his companions. The evening was given to teaching and prayer; the Sabbath to mission-preaching in the Synagogue. The house of some member of the Christian community would probably be chosen for the love-feasts and the Supper of the Lord. And a fixed place for instruction, something in the nature of a lecture-room, was found in what is called "the School of Tyrannus."

For two full years he continued to make Ephesus the centre of his activity.

Two events stand out prominently in the narrative of St. Paul's sojourn. They are (1) the scene with the seven sons of Sceva, and (2) the tumult of Demetrius, ending in the riot in the theatre.

(1) The first of these is a very singular story. Ephesus, we must remember, was the head-quarters of magic. All sorts of charms and incantations were invented and sold there. Amulets to preserve people from bodily danger were common; and also mysterious words written on slips of parchment, called Ephesian letters. The study of these had become quite a science. Shortly before St. Paul's arrival, the impostor Apollonius of Tyana had reached Ephesus, had preached in the great theatre and made not a few disciples.

The impostors tried their hand at the same works by using the name of the Lord Jesus. Some Jewish exorcists who put their trust in spells made an experiment on a demoniac, but were miserably baffled. The rumour of the defeat spread through the city.¹ And then there came a scene that has hardly a parallel in the early history of the gospel.

Some even of the converts to Christianity, we see, had not abandoned magic. These, panic-stricken and condemned by their own consciences, came and publicly confessed how they had tampered with these

¹ Plumptre, *St. Paul in Asia Minor*, p. 119 (abridged).

secret magical practices. They brought their scrolls and volumes with their mysterious characters and publicly burnt them. The amount of their value was more than £2,000 of our money. Readers of Italian history may remember the scene in the Monte della Pieta, when the people of Florence repented at the preaching of Savonarola.

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

(2) We pass on to the tumult that threatened St. Paul's life, which was stirred up by Demetrius "the silversmith who made silver shrines or small models" of the great Temple of Artemis.

There is no need to go through the whole of the narrative which occupies the last twenty verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. It is very graphic. One thing may be added to it, which brings out still more the violence of the threatened attack. It was probably the month of May, a time when the festival of the Artemisia was being celebrated; the whole month was specially devoted to the goddess, and this drew an immense concourse of people into the city. But this year there was a falling off in the gaiety, there was less demand for the silver models. Hence the exasperation of the workmen, and the gathering under Demetrius of what we should now call a trades-union meeting of the skilled artisans! Hence the senseless cry by the vast assembly, first at this meeting and then again after the rush into the theatre, of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," for the space of two hours.

St. Paul's life was evidently in imminent peril. The mob, however, was balked of their prey. Though they seized two of his companions, the Apostle himself was warned betimes not to venture within the vast building.

And as Demetrius' gathering was somewhat like a trades-union meeting of our times, so is it fanciful to see something like a modern arbitrator in the

character of the town-clerk or Recorder, who managed to calm down the passions of the tumultuous assembly?

He at length gained a hearing, and by his admirably sensible and skilful speech successfully appealed to their reason. "If Demetrius and his artisans have any complaint to lodge, the sessions are going on, and there are proconsuls to settle the matter by law. If other questions are at issue, carry them to the lawful assembly. A tumult of this kind exposes your city to a charge of sedition, and the imperial power of Rome will punish you severely for such a breach of order, will curtail your privileges, or perhaps will deprive you of them altogether."

It was a model of what a popular harangue under such circumstances should be.

Thus God raised up friends and advisers for St. Paul on that critical occasion, both in the timely counsel of the president of the games, and by the wise words of the chief magistrate.

The storm blows over; and St. Paul passes on, after a season, into Europe, to revisit the Churches he has founded, and that he loved so well, in Macedonia; and to enter on fresh spheres of work.

SECTION X

THE ARRIVAL AT ROME—THE TWO IMPRISONMENTS—THE MARTYRDOM

FROM the close of St. Paul's third missionary journey to his arrival at Rome many interesting events occur, which need not be given in detail. We pass over the touching incident of his meeting the Ephesian elders at Miletus, his farewell warning, and the solemn act of prayer on the sea-shore. We pass over the plots of the Jews, his second assertion of his claim to the rights of a Roman citizen, his arraign-

ment first before Felix and then before Festus and Agrippa, with that memorable reply to Agrippa, which is the noblest example of perfect courtesy—Acts xxvi. 29: "Except these bonds." We need not dwell on the voyage to Rome, whither St. Paul goes to appeal to the Emperor, or on St. Luke's graphic description of the shipwreck.

We take up the narrative at his arrival at Rome, whither his great Epistle had already been sent, where "he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." A light chain fastened St. Paul's wrist to that of a soldier. His circumstances were easier and more hopeful and restful. His work went on. The presence of many friends in Rome cheered him. Among them (besides Luke) were Timothy, Tychicus, Epaphras, Aristarchus, Onesimus, and Mark. We cannot easily guess what causes may have delayed the hearing of his cause at Rome. His opponents, in despair of getting him condemned, may have put off the trial as long as they could.¹ Possibly the Apostle was wholly overlooked among the number of appeals which were constantly soliciting the Emperor's attention.

During the interval of this detention some of the greatest of St. Paul's Epistles were written. Such is the group of letters addressed to Philemon, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians.

In the first chapter to the Philippians we read, "So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace." If, with Bishop Lightfoot, we take the word "palace" to mean the imperial residence, we may suppose Paul to have been kept in charge, though lodged in the immediate custody of the guard which kept watch around the palace. Now to have access to the

¹ Abridged from Ramsay's *St. Paul*, p. 349 *seq.*

household of Cæsar was to be put in communication with some of the most intelligent people of the day.

And there is also the greeting to the disciples at Philippi. "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household," seems to imply that he stood on an easy footing with the inmates of their class in the palace, and he may also have attracted the notice of persons of higher mark.

We are approaching the close of the Great Apostle's long career. What, then, is known to us of his last days? It must be confessed that our authorities for this period are few. They chiefly consist of what we may gather from the last series of his Epistles, the three that are known as the Pastoral Epistles, the second to Timothy and the one to Titus. And to the scanty notices of his doings there given us we can add a very few others gleaned from the earliest of the Fathers. Of these the principal is the well-known passage in St. Clement, who was possibly the disciple of St. Paul. Writing from Rome to Corinth he says that "after instructing the Roman Empire in righteousness, he had gone to the extremity of the West, and after witnessing to the truth in the most public manner, before the highest authorities, so he came to his end." By the extremity of the West some understand that he carried out his purpose (Romans xv.) of visiting Spain—"whenever I take my journey into Spain"—but this is only a matter of conjecture.

We keep, however, to what we learn from the Bible itself. St. Luke's account of St. Paul ends with the last two verses of the twenty-eighth chapter of the Acts, which brings the history down to the end of two years after his first imprisonment began. As to St. Paul's release after his first imprisonment, he himself was fairly confident of the issue when he wrote to the Philippians, "*I trust that I shall come to you shortly.*" And if we believe that the three Pastoral Epistles were written by St. Paul we must believe

that he was acquitted. To quote but one passage from the Epistle to Titus, the words "I have determined to winter there" (at Nicopolis)—this certainly shows that he was then a free man with power to regulate his own actions.

If we piece together the few personal notices in the three Epistles, the outline of his last travels was something as follows. They must have lasted three or four years, and in the first instance they took him to Macedonia, and then to Asia Minor. Corinth seems also to have been visited, and thence he may have sailed with Titus for Crete, where Paul tells us in his letter that he left him. It is not certain where he was arrested and taken back to Rome. Some say it was at Troas, where he left with Carpus his travelling cloak, his precious books, and his vellum rolls or parchments.¹ And it looks as if his departure was hasty and involuntary if he left behind him what he valued so much. The veil that hides his fate is raised for a moment. We see his confinement was now more rigorous. "He fares ill" (he says) "as a malefactor." Gloom and hopelessness encompass him. "Only Luke is with him." The Second Epistle to Timothy is the testament of a dying man. Yet this much we can make out. There were evidently two hearings of his case. This is plain from his words,² "At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me. But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

What, then, we ask, was this hearing and this deliverance?

It has been supposed that St. Paul was accused of complicity and sympathy with the incendiaries who had burnt Rome—the Great Fire, in the year 64 A.D.

¹ "Perhaps among them was the *diploma* of his Roman franchise."—Farrar.

² This cannot mean his trial on the first imprisonment (Acts xxviii.), because he was then acquitted.

Nero, the Emperor, was suspected of causing it. And how did he meet the charge? He attempted to divert the suspicion upon the Christians, and thus began his cruel persecution of them. But the accusation was too flagrantly preposterous. Where were the proofs? That charge was triumphantly disproved. Once more St. Paul returned to his lonely prison. There was a second and fatal charge heard later. We can hardly doubt that it was that of treason, as supposed to be shown by hostility to the customs of society, and by weakening (as was alleged) the imperial authority.

Those noble and touching words, written to Timothy when he is evidently awaiting his end, which of us can ever hear them without deep emotion?

"I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

The forced inactivity of prison life, the monotony, the isolation—to a man with his heart on fire like St. Paul—think what it must have been! He had to sit still, to feel that most men would count the work of his life to be a failure. And, indeed, judged by appearances, looked at from the outside only, his life did seem a failure. "But time has shown where the failure really was; time has shown that the forces of the Roman Empire, which seemed to overwhelm him, were themselves ready to perish, and to give way before the Christianity which he preached."

With the last chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy we hear St. Paul's last word.

The traditional scene of St. Paul's martyrdom is three miles from the city on the road to Ostia, the port of Rome. It is in a district pestiferous from malaria; and the Church of the Three Fountains, built over it, is approached by an avenue of eucalyptus trees. Being a Roman citizen, he was beheaded, and

the weapon used would be the sword, which is always seen as the emblem in paintings and stained-glass windows representing the Apostle.

We may picture to ourselves the calm heroic fortitude with which he would meet his fate. "He had a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man. If he looked backward, he had the remembrance of a life well spent; if he looked forward, he had the prospect of speedy admission into the presence of the Saviour, whom through thirty years of missionary labour he had striven to love."¹

Thus ended the earthly career of the man who among the Apostles and early followers of Jesus was eminently entitled to be called great. Intent on carrying the message of the Cross far and wide upon earth; zealous, intense, courageous, he was the foremost of missionaries. His life in the service of his Master was a succession of conflicts, and was passed amidst conditions of hardship, sacrifice and labour at a poor handicraft for his own support.

Under the circumstances his achievement must be regarded as remarkable, although the number of his converts was not large, and many of the little Churches he founded disappeared and have left no record in the history of Christianity.

His apostleship of the Gentiles was the apostleship and the gospel of humanity, of freedom from the yoke of formalism, and of the love that "hopeth all things;" his spiritual interpretation of Christianity, his idea of the mystic fellowship with Jesus, and his conception of the life that is hid with Christ in God, will be cherished by the devout, wherever the religion of the Master shall be most deeply understood. His ethical zeal, his life of devotion, of heroic self-sacrifice, of single-eyed service and of unflinching fidelity, will remain as an ideal and inspiration to the generations

¹ A. S. Farrar, *University Sermons*, 1859, p. 232.

to come. Alone he went to his death, a unique and majestic figure, yet not really to death, but to the resurrection and the life, which, in the order of God, belong to the true, the brave, and the good.¹

¹ Orello Cone, D.D., *Paul, the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher*, ch. vi. Adam and Charles Black, 1898.

PART II

MARTYRS AND FATHERS FROM THE SECOND TO THE FIFTH CENTURY

SECTION I

THE ROMAN EMPIRE—THE PERSECUTIONS—M. AURELIUS—
CONSTANTINE—THEODOSIUS—THE PREPARATION OF THE
HEATHEN WORLD FOR RECEIVING CHRISTIANITY

“The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ.”—Rev. xi. 15.

“PERSONAL influence is the key of great movements, the soul of all that is deep and powerful, both in what lasts and in what makes change.”¹

It was by personal influence Christ’s Church was founded, and by this it was to stand.

Before speaking of a few of the chief Fathers and saints, it is necessary to say something on the state of the Roman Empire under which they lived, and how the heathen world during those centuries was gravitating steadily towards Christianity.

The state of society under the early Roman Empire is well depicted in the following lines of Matthew Arnold—

“On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell,
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.
In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay ;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian Way ;
He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crown’d his head with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker pass’d
The impracticable hours.”

¹ Dean Church, *University Sermons*, pp. 137, 138.

The Empire of Rome, with all its network of civilization, its magnificent roads, its system of jurisprudence, its rich inheritance of material and intellectual wealth, was corrupt at the core.

We may admit that, even under the early Empire, there were some bright examples (such as Agricola and Thræsea) of guilelessness and unsullied faithfulness in the discharge of duty, to redeem the darker features of the age. Still, after all honour is done to such names, whether in the camp or the senate, in philosophy or in private life, we must confess that Rome at this time was a most uncongenial soil for the development of the Christian graces. Uncongenial, truly, to human eyes; but God seeth not as man seeth. The wealthy voluptuaries, sated with the enervating indulgences of the bath, the banquet, and the circus, united softness of living with a callous insensibility to suffering in others. The poorer classes, on the other hand, with their appetite for amusement stimulated and gratified to excess, were unnaturally hardened by the constant spectacle of death exhibited in the amphitheatre.

And lastly, though freedom of discussion was permitted, it could not cure the mental and moral diseases of the more thoughtful who withdrew themselves from such corrupting influences. Stoicism was, perhaps, the best resource for the unaided intellect of the time: but Stoicism could promise no real comfort amidst the business of life. It rather counselled retirement from its temptations. It became, as has been said, "a consolation for inactivity, rather than a stimulus to action."

During the space of almost two hundred years from the accession of Augustus to the death of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 160, the Roman power was in its full meridian blaze of splendour. It enjoyed a political prosperity and felicity that has seldom fallen to the lot of any nation. To quote a well-known passage in Gibbon—

"If a man," he says, "were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws."¹

Three unhappy circumstances formed the chief abatements of the felicity that the Roman world would otherwise have enjoyed—

(1) The personal vices of some of the emperors like Nero, Domitian, and Commodus.

(2) The existence of slavery.

(3) The frequent persecution of the Christians, and that even by some of the best of the emperors, for instance by Marcus Aurelius.

How, it has often been asked, could such a man, whose life was a continuous effort after righteousness—a life of continual self-repression—how could such a one bring himself to countenance the putting to death of the lowly, harmless followers of Jesus?

Various answers have been given. How far the Emperor was himself responsible for the martyrdoms of Justin and Polycarp, of Blandina and Pothinus and other victims, has been questioned. They took place not at Rome, but in Gaul and Asia Minor. They were not, it has been held, due to his direct instigation, nor in special accordance with his desire. Marcus Aurelius cannot, indeed, be absolved from

¹ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. iii.

the charge of letting the law take its course, but he sinned in ignorance of what the new religion really was, and of its Founder.¹ He was far less culpable in acting as he did than some Christians whose persecutions in the name of religion form some of the blackest pages in history. He was jealous of the inherited worship of Rome. He regarded the national cult as part and parcel of the fabric of the empire with which he was entrusted. Such considerations mitigate harsher feelings, and Christianity is nothing if it does not exercise the virtue of forgiveness towards such a foe.

Yes! and may we not go further than this, and say that for a pure and candid spirit like that of Marcus Aurelius—a spirit that knew full well and exemplified in itself the value of discipline—there must be a place prepared above that of many a mere nominal Christian?

One signal merit of Aurelius consists in the fact that he not only preached, but practised. He never neglected any of his imperial functions. "No more talk of what the good man should be. Do it." He took up his cross and bore it patiently. The "Thoughts" were penned in the brief intervals allowed by the actual campaigns on the wild frontier lands of Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary. Here are a few.

"Shun wayward random thoughts, and, above all, meddling and ill-nature. Limit yourself habitually to such regards, that if suddenly asked, 'What is in your thoughts now?' you could tell at once the candid and unhesitating truth" (Book iii. 4).

"One thing is of real worth, to live out life in truth and justice, with charity even to the false and unjust.

"When you want to cheer your spirits, consider the excellences of those about you—one so effective,

¹ "The Antonines lived and died with an utter misconception of Christianity."—Matthew Arnold.

another so unassuming, another so open-handed, and so on and so on. Nothing is more cheering than exemplifications of virtue in the characters of those about us" (Book vi. 48).

"The mind free from passions is a citadel; man has no stronger fortress to which he can fly for refuge and remain impregnable" (Book viii. 48).

"Men exist for one another. Better them then, or bear with them" (Book viii. 59).

"Unhasting, yet unresting, a smiling face, yet a firm heart—such is the faithful follower of reason" (Book x. 12).

"How goes it with your Inner Self? That is everything. All else, in your control or out of it, is dust of the dead and smoke" (Book x. 33).

Such are a few among the golden maxims of one who without self-deception communed with his own soul.

The Emperor M. Aurelius died in the year 180 A.D.

A brief sketch of the next two centuries will carry us on to the time of the three Latin Fathers, Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome, all of whom were born about the middle of the fourth century of our era. The heathen world was perceptibly gravitating towards Christianity. And this gradual tendency towards conversion we may look at in two ways—first, in its spiritual progress, secondly in its temporal. First, then, spiritually we may notice how an impression was being made on the stony heart of the heathen, apart from Christian preaching and Christian revelation. . . . There was a distinct advance in humanity during these two centuries. It was shown by the alleviation of slavery, by the brutal usages of the amphitheatre being softened, till at last they were abolished, by the higher social rank given to women. In this and other ways a preparation was being made for receiving the

law of love. Men are equal in the sight of God. Men have equal claims on one another.

Those two truths were becoming plainer—the sentiment of mercy and pity, the sentiment of mutual sympathy. This seems to have given them the first glimpse of an idea of divine grace, of a law of love. They felt about, as men still dazzled and purblind, for the invisible and seemingly inaccessible Being—as St. Paul said to the Athenians, “if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.” This was shown in their conscious weakness and infirmity—in the struggles which they felt within them of the flesh against the spirit, and of the pride of intellect against the spirit of humility.

Again, troubles made men more ready to accept Christ, when offered to them. They forced on them a nobler view of human nature, and brought them to the divine. The baffling of worldly pride, the dashing of worldly hope, the commotions within the Empire and the barbarians without, the incursions of tribes such as those in the midst of whose incursions M. Aurelius composed his *Meditations*, drove men to look above themselves.

Another sign of this advance is seen in the development of the spirit of Prayer. In Juvenal there is a famous answer to the question, What should we pray for? Leave the Gods to decide what is best for us (he says), they know best. Still, if you do pray, ask for a sound mind in a sound body, a spirit brave, fearless of death, reckoning life's close as one of kind Nature's boons, a spirit ignorant of anger or desire.

That is fine, but it is surpassed by the prayers of M. Aurelius the Emperor and by Epictetus the Slave, the two extremes of social rank. Such aspirations as “Keep me from all evil desires, even to those who have done me evil; make me resigned under calumny, content in poverty, cheerful in sickness,”

—come nearest to the spirit of Christianity. Those who could utter prayers like these were not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.

Thus assurance and peace were opening out to the minds of the heathen world. And while they were thus inquiring, an answer to their wants and questions was ready. It was given them in the positive truths of Christianity, in the creeds of the Church. This assurance, this greater peace of mind, is a fourth indication of the advance that Humanity was now making in the spiritual realm. The Creed handed down from the first preaching of the Apostles, and based on Scripture, fulfilled the conditions that the heathen longed for—the Creed that we respect, maintained by bishops, confessors, and martyrs, through four centuries of trial, maintained firmly by both East and West, North and South, drawn out at last fully in the confession of the Nicene Fathers, at a General Council of the Church—this replied to their questions, and went a long way to solve their doubts. It showed them the nature of God—of sin—of redemption—the fact of a future judgment and a final retribution.¹

Let us now turn to the outward, external, temporal side of this momentous change, and mark a few of the chief stages and landmarks in the advance of Christ's Kingdom, as seen in history in the first four centuries.

To what has been said, I must first add something on the *Persecutions*. Speaking of M. Aurelius, they may seem at first the very opposite of advance, as no doubt they were for the time, but the contrast of the final triumph comes out all the more strongly from them. According to the old saying, "*The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.*"

There were during these centuries ten persecutions—the last was in the year 303 A.D.

¹ Merivale, *Conversion of the Roman Empire*, Lectures v, vi.

There was, first, that under Nero, wherein St. Peter and St. Paul suffered.

Next, that under Domitian, when St. John was a martyr in will, if not actually in deed.

Third and fourth come the persecutions under Trajan and Hadrian, marked by the martyrdom of St. Ignatius.

Fifth, under the Emperor M. Aurelius there suffered Polycarp, Justin, and the martyrs of Lyons, Blandina and Pothinus.

After them we come to the beginning of the third century, when the scene is chiefly in Africa in the reign of Severus, when St. Perpetua and others there gave up their lives for Christ.

Seventh and eighth.—Then followed an interval of peace, and then again the fearful terrors of torture and death were begun by the brutal Thracian Maximus. Soon there came the Decian persecution, wherein St. Fabian died, the first Martyr Bishop of Rome whose death rests on certain testimony.

Ninth.—St. Cyprian marks the next attack on the faith.

Tenth, last and most bitter of all, was the persecution of Diocletian, who vainly boasted that he had blotted out the very name of Christian.

The Gallic provinces, as a rule, were excepted, but one famous example in our own island cannot be passed over, St. Alban, of Verulam. These ten persecutions were sometimes compared by the Fathers to the ten plagues of Egypt.

The last under Diocletian was the most violent and cruel of all. His colleagues in the Empire made him believe that his palace at Nicomedia had been set on fire by some Christians. But he could not arrest the progress of Christ's Kingdom. The churches were rebuilt, the offices of religion were resumed, and Diocletian himself, eight years after his abdication, lived just to hear of the Edict of Milan, under Constantine, 313 A.D.

This is one of the great landmarks in Church history. It has been called the Charter of Christianity. It proclaimed absolute freedom in the matter of religion. Christians and all others were to be freely permitted to follow whatever religion each might choose. And, moreover, restitution was to be made to the Christian body of all churches and other buildings that had been alienated from them.

The conversion of Constantine, imperfect as it was, and his establishment of Christianity, mark this period as all-important. On Constantine himself we cannot dwell at any great length. But the story of the famous vision seen by him before advancing to his victory at the *Ponte Molle* must here be repeated, and a few words added on the character of this remarkable man.

He was approaching Rome for the first time, filled with awe at the thought of the great city, when in the afternoon he beheld a brilliant cross in the heavens above the declining sun. On the cross appeared, as he imagined, an inscription in Greek letters, "*In this conquer.*"

Constantine related this on oath to the historian Eusebius, and the sacred symbol of the cross was adopted by him instead of the Roman Eagle, and he professed himself a disciple of the Christian faith. There is no good reason to doubt the occurrence, so far as the appearance of a cross. If it was seen by others, it may well have been what is known as a *parhelion*, which often takes the form of a cross. It is not easy to give a just summary of Constantine's character. His love for the Christian religion appears to have been sincere, though often mistaken. His zeal for its advancement was constantly manifested by the number of churches he built, and by the munificent sums he applied for the due maintenance of the clergy. He was devout in his own practice, and composed a prayer for the use of his soldiers. The fatal stain upon his glory is the execution of his eldest son, Crispus. After the death of Crispus,

Constantine appears to have felt the agonies of remorse, bordering upon distraction, and to have vainly sought comfort and absolution from the ministers of Pagan superstition, as well as from those of the true religion.

As Dean Stanley¹ says, "He is a character not to be imitated nor admired, but much to be remembered and deeply to be studied."

Another great Emperor and outstanding character of this period is Theodosius, who, from the humble labours of his farm in Spain, was summoned to the throne, thirty-two years after the death of Constantine.

Here too, in his reign, we have an important landmark. The remarkable scene at Milan, his being forbidden by St. Ambrose to enter the church, and his penitence, showed that the old world of Paganism had come to an end, and the new world of Christianity had commenced.

Among other signs of the growth of the Church at the end of the fourth century are these:—

The fall of Paganism. Religion now claimed the position of an independent power. It became a possible rival of the State. The followers of heathen rites and practices were compelled to take refuge in the country villages, and this is the origin of the term "pagan"—*pagus* being the Latin word for village.

One more fact may be mentioned in proof of the advance of the Church in outward growth. It is the importance attached to the election of the Bishop of Rome, Damasus, in the year 367.

The Christian bishop² is become so important a personage by this time as to be mentioned in the general history of the times, and not only in the chronicles of the Church. In much of this advance, no doubt, lay hid the seeds of evil. Christianity did not rise in its worldly position without exposing itself to the temptations of this world. Christianity, alas!

¹ *Eastern Church*, Lect. vi.

² Milman's *Latin Christianity*, Bk. I. ch. ii.

began to grow somewhat haughty and wanton in its triumph. Episcopal pride begins to be mentioned. . . . St. Jerome says of the priests and bishops, "They imagine they have been entrusted, not with the stewardship of Christ, but with the sovereignty."¹

"The lives of Christians have ever been the last and surest argument for Christianity." The lives of the believers were for the most part exemplary amidst the corruption around them. It was seen (to select only a few points) in their sobriety and chastity, and good faith, in forbearance from hate and vengeance, in charity and almsgiving, in founding hospitals, redeeming captives, kindness and fostering care for infants (who before this were often exposed). Well might the heathen world, in looking on their example, when the very opposite of all this was the rule and habit of society—well might they exclaim, as they did, "*See how these Christians love one another!*"

SECTION II

IGNATIUS AND POLYCARP

A BRIEF mention may suffice of two of the Apostolic Fathers, who were also martyrs.

Very little is known of Ignatius himself. Had it not been for his tragic end, he would hardly have left the shadow of a name.

He was probably sacrificed to the violence of a popular outbreak and the arbitrary caprice of a governor, who, in acting against an illegal sect, was left largely to his own discretion. The outbreak of Pagan violence may have been partly due to some calamity, such as an earthquake or a drought; for Pagan priests at Antioch were a numerous class, and assiduously attributed such misfortunes to the anger

¹ "The world got into the Church in the fourth century, and we have never been able to get it out since."—Bp. Westcott.

of the gods, alienated, as they said, by the growing neglect of their worship.

Of the charges laid against him, and of his trial, nothing is mentioned. He was sent to Rome to die, perhaps because the Government thought that an example was needed to terrify the Christians.

From Antioch Ignatius set forth with cheerful gladness to meet his fate. A soldier was always fastened by one arm with a coupling-chain to the prisoner. Ignatius complains that his guardians were like "ten leopards," so that he was "fighting with wild beasts" all the way to Rome, "by land and sea, by night and day."

We do not know with certainty the route which the martyr followed.

He was allowed to discourse with the Christians of every city in which he stayed. In this respect the circumstances of his journey closely resemble those of St. Paul. In point of fact, from the moment of his condemnation he became more and more in the eyes of Christians a memorable personage, whom it was a privilege to see, and with whom it was an honour to converse.

Here is a passage from his Letter to the Romans written at Smyrna:—

"Of what value is all the world (he says)? Better to die for Christ than to rule over its farthest kingdoms. The pangs of a new birth are upon me. Do not hinder me from living; do not desire my death! Suffer me to receive the pure light, to become a man, to be an imitator of the passion of my God. Do not abet Satan against me. I write to you in the midst of life, yet lusting after death. You will only be showing envy and hatred towards me, not love, if you procure the saving of my life."

This impassioned cry for martyrdom is new to Christianity, and marks a new epoch in the history of the world. Myriads of condemned criminals in all ages have written to plead earnestly for life, but

Ignatius writes to entreat the glory and blessedness of a martyr's death. No one can fail to admire the strength of his enthusiasm, the heroic certitude of his faith. Yet we must not conceal the truth, that this famous letter exercised an influence which was not entirely wholesome.

His brief stay at Smyrna ended soon after August 24, 115 A.D., the date given in his Letter to the Romans.

The soldiers probably hurried on in order to reach Rome in time for some anniversary and its accompanying games. This may have been October 17, the day traditionally assigned for his martyrdom. The Roman Christians have not preserved a single incident of his martyrdom. We only know that he died in the great Flavian amphitheatre, leaving behind him an immortal name. Ignatius would not himself have wished the details of his witness to be preserved when those of St. Peter and St. Paul have wholly perished. Enough for him to know that his name was written in the Book of Life.

The date of the martyrdom cannot be fixed with absolute certainty, but it is generally believed to have been in the year 115 A.D. About forty or fifty years later, the last survivors of the disciples of St. John were added to the noble army of martyrs. They were Papias of Hierapolis, the venerable Pothinus of Lyons, where the traditional dungeon in the crypt named after him is shown, and Polycarp of Smyrna.

St. Polycarp was probably born about the year 70 A.D., so memorable as the year in which Jerusalem fell. It is certain that he had been a hearer of St. John, and it is probable that during his youth and early manhood he must also have seen and known St. Andrew at Ephesus, and St. Philip in the neighbouring Hierapolis.

"Swear," said the proconsul, "and I will set thee free. Revile Christ." Then came the famous answer, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He

hath done me no wrong. How then can I speak evil of my King, who saved me?"

In vain the proconsul urged him. He cut short the examination by telling him plainly, "I am a Christian."

The proconsul announced by his herald that Polycarp had professed himself a Christian. Then rose a yell of Jews and Pagans—"Away with the father of the Christians, the puller-down of our gods!" And the multitude shouted to the Asiarch to let a lion loose on him. But the sports were over, and he refused. Then they clamoured that he should be burnt. The Asiarch yielded. "Faithful unto death" he was, so as to win "a crown of life." It was by faith that he and women such as the gentle Blandina and others of that time felt their hearts glow with joy when they heard the rabble in their bloodthirsty frenzy cry, "The Christians to the lions!" The exultation of the victims triumphed over that of the murderers.

SECTION III¹

ST. JEROME

OF the four Latin Fathers of the Church, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory, and the four Greek Fathers, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Chrysostom, we may select four as specially keeping alight the torch of Christianity, and representing the continuity of the Church in a critical period. They are Jerome, Augustine, Athanasius, and Chrysostom.

The father and mother of St. Jerome were both Christians.

He inherited an estate which supplied all his wants, and in the freedom of his Epistles he tells us, as frankly as Augustine, that during what we should

¹ Compiled from Farrar's *Lives of the Fathers*.

call his University course at Rome, he fell into grievous temptation.

Yet all the while the Spirit of God was struggling within him. When the Sunday brought some relaxation of the dreary round of grammar, logic, and declamation, he used to wander about Rome with friends of his own age, to visit the tombs of the apostles and martyrs. To find the latter he had to descend into the darkness of the Catacombs. Even in these early years Jerome had caught the spirit of his age. He regarded the martyrs with a feeling akin to positive worship; cherished relics with a devotion which stirred the contempt of the Pagans; and identified spiritual perfection with an ascetic discipline of the utmost severity.

Eager to visit Jerusalem, and see the hermits of Syria and Egypt, Jerome set out for the East, and was accompanied on his travels by Innocentius and other companions. He visited the great cities, and studied under distinguished teachers. They suffered cruelly from the fatigues of the journey and the terrific heat, and Antioch appeared to them like a haven of refuge to shipwrecked men. But travel and fasting had so overtaxed their strength that, at Antioch, Jerome succumbed to a complication of diseases. Innocentius not only fell ill, but, to the intense grief of his friend, died, as did also the freedman Hylas, and Jerome, overwhelmed with these sorrows, lay ill for the greater part of a year.

Such a succession of misfortunes tended still further to break the last ties which bound Jerome to the world.

He has the honour to be one of the very few Fathers, either Greek or Latin, who knew anything of Hebrew, and could explain the true meaning of the Old Testament by a reference to the original. He was thus enabled to carry out the Vulgate translation, which was the noblest and most valuable work of all his life.

Antioch at that time could not have been a pleasant residence for any one who desired peace, and we are not surprised that Jerome soon left it for a visit to Constantinople.

With the exception of his sufferings from injured eyesight, Jerome's stay at Constantinople was probably the happiest period of his maturer years.

At the close of 381 A.D. Jerome left Constantinople to reside once more in Rome.

During the earlier years of Jerome's stay there his name was in every mouth. The world admired his versatility, his learning, his vegetarian diet. His pale ascetic face, his body attenuated by fasting, made men look up to him as a saint, and they also praised his humility and his eloquence. His popularity was universal, and he was openly named as the fittest successor to the chair of St. Peter. But a very short time served to change the popularity into hatred.

It would have been better if he, like Athanasius and Augustine, had found his chief friendships among those of his own sex.

It must, however, be said to Jerome's credit that he changed for the better the entire aspect of Roman society. Among his lady friends were Marcella, Paula, Fabiola, all of the highest rank. If he gave to his female converts a too partial development, he at least drew them to lives infinitely more noble than those which prevailed either in Pagan or Christian society.

Jerome was safe as long as Pope Damasus was his friend. Damasus reached the age of eighty. When he died, in 384 A.D., Siricius was elected Pope, and Jerome's fortunes at once changed for the worse. He returned to the East. His final retreat and monastic home was Bethlehem.

Jerome's literary activity continued unbroken to the close of his career. Ecclesiastics of all ranks, and distinguished persons of both sexes, were constantly writing to him on matters of theology, morals,

and Biblical criticisms, and his answers were always interesting, sometimes valuable.

He was now an old man. His heart was heavy with sorrow, his eyes were dim with age. He found it impossible to read at night the small letters of his Hebrew manuscripts, which tried his eyes even in full daylight. Even Greek he was no longer able to read by lamplight, and he had to ask his brother monks to read to him.

He had now lived to that epoch which marks the beginning of "the Death of Rome."

He died in the year 420 A.D., and his tomb is shown in a cavern near the scene of the Nativity.

"The Last Communion of St. Jerome is the subject of one of the most celebrated pictures in the world,—the St. Jerome of Domenichino, which has been thought worthy of being placed opposite to the Transfiguration of Raphael, in the Vatican. The aged saint,—feeble, emaciated, dying,—is borne in the arms of his disciples to the chapel of his monastery, and placed within the porch. A young priest sustains him; St. Paula, kneeling, kisses one of his thin bony hands; the saint fixes his eager eyes on the countenance of the priest, who is about to administer the Sacrament,—a noble, dignified figure in a rich ecclesiastical dress; a deacon holds the cup, and an attendant priest the book; the lion¹ droops his head with an expression of grief; the eyes and attention of all are on the dying saint, while four angels, hovering above, look down upon the scene."²

¹ The lion, the symbol of St. Jerome, represents his fervid character, and gave rise to the legend of his healing a lion who came to him with a wounded foot.

² Mrs. Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, vol. i. p. 298.

SECTION IV¹

ST. AUGUSTINE

IN turning from St. Jerome to St. Augustine we find ourselves in the presence of a gentler influence and of a still greater name in the Church of Christ.

Perhaps it is the early life of St. Augustine, the child of many tears, which has most widely touched human hearts. His mother Monica, her prayers, her tears; then the dissolute youth of this great saint; then his conviction of sin, his inward struggles, his search after truth, his reconciliation with God—all these things told in the glowing language of his *Confessions* have found a response in every generation.

The *Confessions* of St. Augustine refer to his life before his baptism. This did not take place till the thirty-third year of his age. For at least nine years of his early manhood he had been led away by a false light, a false guide.

Elsewhere he says, "I resolved then to bend my mind to the Holy Scriptures, that I might see *what they really were*. And lo! I discover a thing not understood of the proud, and I was not such an one as could enter into it, nor stoop my neck to follow its leading. But I was hungering and thirsting after Thee, Thine own self—the Truth—in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The crisis came when he was a teacher of rhetoric at Milan. There he became known to St. Ambrose, by whose eloquence and goodness he was at once attracted. A voice within him, which he took for a divine message, repeated in his ears the stirring cry, "*Take, and read, take, and read,*" and he still constantly studied the Scriptures, till his mind became finally resolved, on meeting with the words of the

¹ Abridged from *The Church and the Roman Empire* (ch. xv.), by Arthur Carr.

Apostle, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." "No further would I read," he says, "nor needed I, for instantly, this sentence ended, a serene light was shed in my heart, and all darkness and doubt vanished from me."

Thus was Augustine brought to Christ. It was not of his own will, but of the grace of God.

On the death of Valerius, St. Augustine succeeded to the comparatively unimportant bishopric of Hippo in North Africa. But his influence extended far and wide beyond the limits of his see.

We cannot describe the wealth and value of St. Augustine's literary works. But something must be said of the *City of God*. It was written at a memorable epoch and with a memorable purpose. The epoch was the capture of Rome by Alaric in 410, the purpose was to confute the idea that the calamities of the time were due to Christianity.

The sack of Rome produced an indescribable shock throughout the civilized world. Society seemed to be falling into ruin. Men, looking about for a cause, blamed Christianity. St. Augustine proves that it was by the vices and corruptions of the old Pagan system that ruin had overtaken the empire. He shows the helplessness of paganism and of the philosophic systems which had succeeded it, and then exhibits the lofty aims, the mighty progress, the assured future, the blessed hopes and promise of the "City of God." It is at once a review of history and an exposition of the discipline and doctrine of the Catholic Church.

St. Augustine examines the great success and prosperity and world-wide empire of Rome. Why was this? Because God had allowed it. He disposes the fate of nations as He disposes the hearts of kings—according to His will. He it was who had allowed

the Romans to establish their empire over the then known world. In God's hands they had been a mighty instrument to prepare the way for Christianity, by their orderly government; and thus he endeavours to break down the prejudice of the Romans of his day against the kingdom of Christ which was to take its place. Next he dwells at length on the great benefits that the Christian emperors had bestowed on the world since Constantine had first accepted the new faith.

Particularly does he insist on the idea of peace, as the outcome of Christ's kingdom—peace in place of all the wars and discords that had done so much harm to mankind. And from this he turns naturally to the peace that can be realized alone in Christianity. On this topic he is very full and eloquent. And then he looks on to the heavenly peace which this City of God shall at last attain to in perfection in the vision of God.

These are some of the thoughts with which he closes: "How great will be that happiness, where there shall be no evil, where no good shall be hidden, where there shall be ample leisure for praising God, who will be all in all !

"What will be the degrees and gradations of honour and the proportions of prizes for the blest : who can imagine? who can tell? But that there will be such cannot be doubted. That blessed City of God will have this special blessing, that none in the lower grades will grudge those who are in the higher, just as now the angels do not envy the archangels. There we shall rest—there we shall have leisure—there we shall love, and we shall praise !"

SECTION V

ST. ATHANASIUS

THE Athanasian Creed is what is suggested to most people by the name of Athanasius, and was long believed to be his composition. There are, however, good reasons to think that this was not the case. (1) It was most likely of French or Spanish origin, not African. (2) It contains words and phrases unknown to Athanasius. No! his career is connected more closely with another Creed, the venerable Creed of Nicæa, or Nice.

His first public appearance was at the celebrated Council of Nicæa, 325 A.D., where he opposed the heretic Arius and his partisans with great zeal and eloquence.

To state the teaching of Arius shortly is almost impossible. To go into it at length would be foreign to the purpose of these sketches.

But a few words must be given to it. Arius said that the Second Person of the Trinity was not co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father. The Father (he said) created Christ, but created Him in order that through Him He might create all things. From the subtle nature of the Greek language, he was able to say that Christ was born before all time, and yet that "*there was when He was not.*" He pressed too far the rules of human logic. He pressed too far the analogy of the human relation between a father and a son. He tried to make popular the difficulties of philosophy. He did not fully grasp the nature of time. Arius could not help thinking in terms of time—we cannot think about anything except under the conditions of time and place. But it is a great error to conclude that because this is so, all existence must be under conditions of Time.

At the time of the Council of Nicæa, Athanasius

was not more than thirty years of age, possibly not more than twenty-five. He held no more dignified position than that of Archdeacon to the Bishop or "Pope" Alexander; but he had already acquired a marvellous ascendancy.

Alexandria was the meeting-place of creeds and of all systems of philosophy, art, and literature. In these surroundings the keen intellect of Athanasius grew. Soon he became the leading and the most resolute opponent of Arianism, and at the Council of Nice he stood by the side of the Bishop, advising and suggesting.

His after life was full of interest and adventure. He stood out as almost the sole champion of truth in the midst of slander and of danger to his life. "Athanasius against the world" was hardly an exaggerated phrase.¹

The triumph of the orthodox cause at Nice was expressed by the reception of the creed which, with the additions made afterwards at the Council of Constantinople, has descended to us as the Nicene Creed.

But the Council of Nice failed entirely to root out Arianism. It left as its legacy a long and bitter controversy, and the central figure round which the conflict raged was Athanasius.

The Emperor Constantine at first commanded obedience to the Nicene decisions, but was won over to the other side, chiefly through the influence of Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia, who was a personal friend of the Emperor's sister.

Various charges, quite unfounded, were brought against Athanasius, who succeeded Alexander as Bishop of Alexandria.

Notwithstanding a triumphal acquittal, so great was the Arian influence at court, and so persistent the enemies of Athanasius, that a new charge was

¹ A. Carr, *The Church of the Roman Empire*, ch. v.

brought against him—that he had prevented the sailing of the Alexandrian corn ships to Constantinople. The Emperor pretended to believe the accusation, with the hope perhaps of securing peace for the empire, and banished Athanasius to Trier in the year 336.

In this year the momentarily triumphant opponent of Athanasius, the author of much confusion and evil to the Church, Arius himself perished at Constantinople by a sudden and shocking form of death.

In the following year (337) died Constantine the Great, having been baptized a few days only before his death.

In 338 Athanasius was restored to his bishopric. His return was welcomed with signs of the most enthusiastic joy by the citizens of Alexandria. But his Arian enemies allowed him no rest. For the second time he fled. On this occasion, setting sail for Rome, he laid his case before Pope Julius for decision by a Council.

But news came of the death of the usurper Gregory, and Athanasius was once more allowed to return to his see.

For the moment the attitude of Constantius to Athanasius was gracious. He wrote letters in his favour to the authorities in Egypt. But a change was at hand. In the year 350 an event occurred which deprived Athanasius of a powerful friend, and placed the whole civilized world under the rule of a single Arian despot. This was the death of Constans.

After a treacherous calm of a few weeks, a preconcerted attack was made on the church of Theonas, where Athanasius was assisting at a midnight service. The soldiers rushed into the church, trampling down, wounding and slaying the worshippers. Athanasius himself, after remaining almost to the last, escaped, and retired to the Egyptian desert.

Then a bitter trial came upon him. The Arians introduced into the see of Alexandria an adventurer

of coarse manners and evil repute, named George of Cappadocia.

Athanasius returned to Alexandria under an edict of toleration issued by the Emperor Julian, and he succeeded by the wisdom of his rule and great personal influence in maintaining quiet.

But all this was quite contrary to the intention of Julian. He issued a hostile edict against Athanasius. For a fourth time he fled, waiting till "the little cloud," as he termed it, of Julian's power should be dispersed.

The Nile boat which was carrying Athanasius into exile was closely pursued by the pagan governor of Alexandria. By a clever manœuvre, the boat of Athanasius turned and met its pursuer. As they passed their enemies, they were asked, "Have you seen Athanasius and his friends?" "Yes," exclaimed one, probably the bishop himself; "we saw them close to this spot; they cannot be far distant." And so he eluded further pursuit.

The cloud of the Pagan reaction under Julian soon passed away, and Athanasius was enabled to return, this time for a season of long and almost uninterrupted peace. Then he devoted himself to writing books, to the administration of his diocese, to correspondence with his friends, to the care, it may be said, of the universal Church, and died peacefully in his own home, after a life of persecution and exile, 373 A.D.

There is a celebrated passage in Hooker,¹ with which we may close this brief account of Athanasius. He says: "By the space of forty-six years he was never suffered to enjoy the comfort of a peaceable day from the time of his consecration, till his last hour in this world. The heart of Constantine stolen from him: Constantius, Constantine's successor, his scourge and torment by all the ways that malice armed with sovereign authority could devise and use;

¹ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. 42.

under Julian no rest given him, and in the days of Valentinian as little. Crimes there were laid to his charge many. His judges were evermore the self-same men, by whom his accusers were suborned." Then, after describing how all his friends fell away, he goes on, "Only in Athanasius there was nothing observed throughout the course of that long tragedy, other than such as very well became a wise man to do, and a righteous to suffer. So that this was the plain condition of those times, the world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against it. Half a hundred years spent in doubt and trial, which of the two in the end would prevail ; the side which had all, or else the part which had no friend but God and death,—the one a defender of his innocency, the other a finisher of his troubles."

What is the great lesson of his life? Is it not a protest wherever needed against the religious fashion of the age? The Arian party had completely taken possession of the Court and the Councils of his time. But Scripture "nowhere leads us to suppose that, because all men speak well of us, we are therefore acceptable in the sight of God. There is a deeper work for us to do, the work of true religion—Christ-like and Christ-following."

SECTION VI

ST. CHRYSOSTOM

ST. CHRYSOSTOM'S life was cast in the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century (347-407), a very critical time—the period when the Empire of Rome was just about to give way to the barbarian nations of the North. The two forces in the world that were destined to work hand-in-hand were (1) the young and growing faith of Christianity on the one

hand, and (2) on the other a vigorous and manly race—the barbarians of the North brought into connection with, and converted to Christianity. Those two forces were to establish a new order of things in Europe, on the decay and decline of Rome.

St. Chrysostom differs from the other great Fathers of the Church of his time in one way. He was not so much a great writer, as he was a great preacher; and he did not fight for abstract questions on difficult points of doctrine so much as he did for the grand principles of truth and justice, which all men everywhere feel to be important. He had much to contend with, but the rage of his enemies sprang not from hatred to him about his theological opinions, but from the natural antagonism between good and evil; and hence comes the enduring interest of what he did and said.

To his contemporaries he was known simply by the name of *John*. He was surnamed Chrysostom the Golden-Mouthed on account of his eloquence. His life centres almost entirely round two places, Antioch and Constantinople.

He was born at Antioch (347) of an excellent mother, Anthusa, who devoted herself heart and soul to the care of her children; one who, like the mother of Augustine, ranks high in the annals of Christian womanhood; one of those whose lives and characters made the heathen exclaim, "Heavens! what women these Christians have!"

In his youth he spent a long time in a cavern in prayer and frequent fasting. At length, his health failing under such austerities, he betook himself to the more useful work of priest and pastor.

Antioch was at that time one of the loveliest, stateliest, and most luxurious cities of the Eastern Empire. Chrysostom was at one time tempted to sink beneath its temptations and to become a thoroughly worldly man, but he rose superior to the temptation. He was saved from this peril by two

good influences that are open to all men—(1) a good friend, “the medicine of life,” and (2) study of the Scriptures.

A period of eighteen years followed—a period of happy activity, in which the best part of his homilies on St. Matthew and other books of the New Testament was composed. And in his preaching the 200,000 inhabitants of Antioch heard a call to repentance more powerful than had been heard since the time of the Apostles. He did not hesitate to denounce the sins and the follies of his age, as, for instance, the fashions of ladies who used to wear shawls embroidered with scenes out of the Scriptures, but whose religion, alas, seemed to end there!

Nominal Christians, professed believers, were common then as in every age. They would throng to hear the splendid orator, who woke their admiration even when their hearts were not touched; but what he bade them *do*, that they would not do. They absented themselves from the Prayers, and they turned their back upon the Holy Communion. But he was undaunted; he went on bearing his testimony against the vices of the time; he never wearied in preaching the pure gospel of Christ, and probably those years at Antioch were the most fruitful as well as the happiest in his life.

Once when the people of Antioch had offended the Emperor Theodosius by a sedition raised in consequence of oppressive taxation, and were threatened with severe punishment, it was the eloquence of John Chrysostom that saved them.

He was beloved by many, and when he left Antioch he was regretted by all, who then felt what they were losing. The reason why he left his native city was that he was appointed Patriarch or Archbishop of Constantinople. He did not wish to go himself, and it was found necessary to carry him off without the knowledge of his fellow-citizens.

He was hurried away in spite of all remonstrances,

and driven off at full speed from stage to stage, to Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Empire.

Then begins the second period of his life, and his zeal and fidelity while at that capital soon produced a crop of enemies, and a series of troubles which ended only with his life.

The manœuvres, the intrigues, the calumnies, the persecutions he suffered during his later years cannot here be described at length.

He was hardly seated on the episcopal throne before he began to experience that it would be an uneasy seat for one who desired to do his duty. The Empress Eudoxia at first favoured him, but was led to turn against him. He was accused of calling her Jezebel, and he denounced the erection of a silver statue of the Empress close to the Church of St. Sophia. He certainly denounced the profligacy, the waste, the follies and vices of those in high place, in no measured language. Perhaps he was passionate at times, for he had an ardent temperament, a quick manner, and a forcible expression.

He paid the penalty so often exacted for speaking out the truth. The court and his enemies continued to persecute him, and the fickle populace after some wavering turned also against him, and the end was that he was banished from the city. Then they begged the Emperor that he might be recalled. There was a short gleam of prosperity, but it only lasted for two months, and the story of the rest of his life forms one of the most painful chapters in Church history. Base men triumphed, and saintly virtue was humiliated in the dust.

A second time he was banished, and sent to a little village far off in Armenia. But the hatred of his enemies could not rest; he was ordered to be removed to a still more distant spot on the Black Sea, and everything was done to make his journey as painful and perilous to him as it could be.

He had been weak and sickly for a long time, and

now he was sixty years old, and unable to bear hardships. He was forced to travel on in pouring rain; he was not allowed to rest when the sun was oppressive. The journey took three months; throughout it he wrote letters to his friends which breathed the very spirit of Christian patience and charity. But the privations and the suffering were too much for his feeble frame.

One day he could go no further. His cruel guards had to take him back to the place whence they had that morning started, and to lay his exhausted body in a small church close at hand.

He asked to be clothed in white raiment. He received his last Communion and uttered, as his last words, "Glory to God for all. Amen."

Great honour was paid to his memory by the Church from which he had been expelled. Thirty-five years later the relics of the banished Archbishop were brought to the shores of the Bosphorus.

"As once before in his lifetime to greet him on his return from exile, so now, and in still greater numbers, the people bearing torches, crowded the waters of the Strait with their boats to welcome the return of all which remained of their much-wronged spiritual father. The young Emperor (Theodosius II), stooping down, laid his face on the reliquary and implored forgiveness for the injuries his parents had inflicted on the saint whose ashes it contained. That reliquary was then deposited near the altar of the Church of the Apostles.

"It is the sad story, so often repeated in history, of goodness and greatness unrecognized, slighted, injured, cut short in a career of usefulness by one generation, and abundantly, but when too late, acknowledged in the next, when posterity pays to the memory and to the tomb the honours which ought to have been bestowed upon the *living* man."¹

¹ *St. Chrysostom, his Life and Times*, by Stephens, 1872.

Thus lived, thus died, one of the best and noblest of the Church's Fathers, St. Chrysostom; one who indeed deserved that title, for he not only preached the gospel, but lived it. To the last moment of his life he showed that calm, cheerful faith, that patience, that untiring perseverance for the good of others, which are, above all, the marks of a Christian saint. "Fools thought his life madness and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!"

PART III

THE DARK AGES

SECTION I ¹

REDEEMING FEATURES—MONASTERIES—CATHEDRALS—DEGRADATION OF LEARNING—GERBERT

SOME historical setting is necessary in order to understand individual characters, some slight knowledge of their environment. Biography without some admixture of history is useless and impossible. I will, therefore, sketch very briefly a few of the characteristic features of what we complacently call the Dark Ages, *i.e.* the period extending from A.D. 800 to 1200, or, in its widest sense, from 500 A.D.

The Monasteries were beyond all price in those days of misrule and turbulence, as places where (it may be imperfectly, yet better than elsewhere) God was worshipped; as a quiet and religious refuge for helpless infancy and old age—a shelter of respectful sympathy for the orphan maiden and the desolate widow; as central points whence agriculture was to spread over bleak hills and barren downs and marshy plains; as repositories of such learning as there then was, and well-springs for the learning which was to be; as nurseries of art and science.

To the timid and indolent the monastery was a refuge from the storms of life; it was a prop and a defence against themselves to the weak and wavering.

The Benedictine Rule meant that monks ought to

¹ The principal authority for this section is Maitland, *The Dark Ages*, new edition by Frederick Stokes, 1889.

make themselves useful to others as well as to themselves. Had it not been for monks and monasteries, the barbarian deluge might have swept away utterly the traces of Roman civilization. The Benedictine monk was the pioneer of civilization and Christianity in England, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Sweden, Denmark, and in the tenth century the Benedictine Rule was general in Europe.

Again, during the period of confusion and turbulence in Europe, which followed the crash of Rome under the onset of the barbarians, and before the empire had been reconstructed by the strong grasp of Karl, the monks were everywhere the champions of order against lawless violence, of the weak and the defenceless against the brute force of the oppressor. Again and again they confronted kings and nobles without fear and without favour, as Columban, for instance, among the Franks, rebuked the profligacy of the Merovingian princes.

Another feature, perhaps the most commendable of monasticism was its unvarying hospitality to all comers. None were to be refused admission; all were to be made welcome, especially monks, clergy, poor, and foreigners. Everything was to be done in courtesy and for the comfort of the guests.

Such hospitality was sure to be largely used in days when travelling was so difficult and dangerous. Benedict wisely provided for a constant influx of strangers. Nowhere, indeed, in his Rule is its tenderness and forethought more remarkable than about the reception of guests.¹

One form of good which was specially cherished by the monastic life was the care of books. The missals and other books used in the Church service were frequently written with great care and pains, illuminated and gilded with almost incredible industry, bound in or covered with plates of gold, silver or carved ivory,

¹ *Rise of Christian Monasticism*, by I. Gregory Smith, ch. vi.

adorned with gems, and even enriched with relics. One instance may show the paucity and the value of books.¹ At the beginning of the tenth century books were so rare in Spain that one and the same copy of the Bible, with a few other volumes, often served several monasteries.

The church and the cloister were, in all ages, the places where books were kept and made and copied, and from whence they were issued to the rest of the world.

The Bible was better known in the Dark Ages than some writers would have us believe. Men thought and spoke and wrote the thoughts and words and phrases of the Bible, and they did this constantly and habitually as the natural mode of expressing themselves. Besides the monasteries, the cathedrals and other public edifices remain as the glory of this period, or at least of its conclusion.

The age during which *Westminster Abbey* was built cannot have been architecturally blank. But, after all, it is difficult for us to realize the depth of general ignorance at the lowest point of degradation in these ages. It was rare for any layman, of whatever rank, to know how to sign his name. And even the clergy, among whom what little learning there was survived, were very little superior. There was some acquaintance with books, but there was no power of original expression. From 500 to 1050 not more than two or three names of really learned men can be mentioned. One of these was Gerbert. He stands out distinctly as the most conspicuous figure of his age. Originally a French monk, he travelled in Spain, and introduced from thence the Arabic numerals into Europe, became Archbishop of Rheims, and at last Pope under the name of Silvester II. His genius turned specially to mathematics and mechanics. He constructed the first watch with a balance, and an organ blown by steam. Like our

¹ Warton's *History of English Poetry*, Book I, Diss. 3.

own Friar Bacon, he was accused of magic, which alone could account for such science, and was thought to be in alliance with the devil. He was great also as a writer, and was one of the founders of the Scholastic Theology, and was the author of a tract on the Eucharist. He had read much of the best Latin literature, and imbibed its spirit. He died in the year 1003.

SECTION II¹

MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE—COLUMBA—COLUMBAN—BONIFACE

THE missionary spirit was strong in these Dark Ages. In the year of the baptism of our Ethelbert in 567, and almost at the same time, the noblest missionary career ever accomplished in Britain came to its end in the distant monastery of Icolmkill, or Iona, in the death of Columba in his seventy-seventh year. He was an *Irishman*. Ireland was then conspicuous for its light, and from it the gospel was transmitted far and near. The conversion of Scotland was one great work of St. Columba. The spot where he landed in his coracle at Iona is still shown. From Iona he pushed his missionary enterprises for more than thirty years among the Picts and Scots, and directed the numerous Churches which were founded in Ireland, Scotland and Northumbria. Iona, that most interesting island, became for the Celtic races the cradle of sacred knowledge, the nursery of bishops, the religious capital of Northern Britain, the burying-place of its kings!

About fifty years later, early in the seventh

¹ The chief authorities for this section are Bright, *Early English Church History*; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, Book IV. ch. v.

century, the same name, with a slight variation, viz. Columbanus or Columban, introduces us to another Irish missionary.¹ The direction which Columban took was towards the south. He ascended the Rhine as far as the Lake of Constance, and founded a monastic establishment at Brigantium or Bregenz. But Columban became wearied of the hardships or difficulties of his position, and at a later period he migrated to the further side of the Alps, where he preached among the relapsed believers of Northern Italy, and founded the illustrious monastery of Bobbio. He left behind him, however, a faithful band of Irish auxiliaries, one of whom, known as *Sz. Gall*, settled in the monastery which has perpetuated his name, near the Lake of Constance.

As time went on, when the faith had become fully established throughout their country, the most ardent spirits of the English Church began to turn their views more and more towards the evangelization of the heathen abroad. The foremost, and also the most illustrious of this band of the English missionaries, was Winfrid, who, under the assumed name of *Bonifacius*, has obtained the title of the Apostle of Germany. He determined to bury himself in regions which seemed to him still to require the restoration of their faith, after the many shocks to which constant war and devastation had subjected it. Such a region was Thuringia, a country then still abounding in heathens. What was the secret of his life?

It was by faith² that "Boniface, leaving his home, and refusing high ecclesiastical honours, went into the wilds of Germany to convert the heathen natives. By faith he cut down the huge oak of Thor, while the people were raging tumultuously around, expecting that the vengeance of the god would burst upon his head. By faith he built a church to the true God, out of the

¹ Merivale's *Conversion of the West*, ch vi.

² J. Hare, *The Victory of Faith*.

oak he had cut down, and persuaded the people to worship there. By faith he baptized above a hundred thousand souls in the name of the Holy Trinity, and built many churches and convents in dreary, savage lands. By faith, when placed at the head of the German Church, he still, although in his seventy-fifth year, persevered in enlarging the Kingdom of Christ, went forth to convert fresh heathen tribes, and met his martyrdom at last with patient joy."

Among the most permanent of this apostle's works was the institution of the abbey of Fulda, which retained through the Middle Ages a position equal in renown to that of St. Gall.

It is difficult at first to see what motives led those men forth so far from their native land. If they had only sought a safe retreat for devotion they might have found retirement as secure in Ireland or in the Scottish isles. It must have been a passionate zeal to convert Pagans to the Cross of Christ! The character of Columba and others like him strongly mark the religious history of this age.

And at a later period the mission work of the Church was carried on with vigour and success. During the ninth century, Christianity, says Dean Milman, "was gathering in nations of converts." The Bulgarians were won to the gospel. The same century witnessed the conversion of Moravia and Bohemia, and the despatch of missionaries to Scandinavia. During the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the Normans, Magyars, and a multitude of formidable tribes were won to Christianity.

SECTION III¹

BEDE

ONE remarkable character in the Dark Ages is an Englishman, Bede—the “Venerable Bede” as later ages called him,—born 673 (not much more than seventy years after the landing of Augustine) in Northumbria, which was then the literary centre of the Christian world in Western Europe.

All the learning of the time was summed up in this Northumbrian scholar. He was the interpreter of the thoughts of past ages to a rude and ignorant race. But his love of England is most shown in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*. All we really know that follows Augustine’s landing we know from him. He was the *first English historian*. He was the *parent of theology* in England. But his life was uneventful.

He tells us himself that he was placed at the age of seven in the Abbey of Wearmouth, under the care of Abbot Benedict Biscop, a man of extraordinary learning and singular piety, who travelled abroad, and was the first to bring home with him cunning masons and glaziers to rear his great church at Wearmouth, and books and costly relics and works of art.

From that day forward he lived under monastic rule as a member of the community, being taken by Ceolfrid to Jarrow about a year after he had been received at Wearmouth. There lay before him at that date some fifty-four years. “I ever found it sweet,” he says, looking back upon those years of happy labour, “to learn or to teach or to write.” Conspicuous as a narrator for honest carefulness, and by the vivid sympathy which makes incident or story so luminous under his touch, Bede is throughout the

¹ This section is borrowed almost entirely from Bright’s *Early English Church History*.

man of patriotic feeling who loves old English songs and hates whatever enfeebles his country or degrades the national life. He is the man of warm heart, whose affections go out to brethren and pupils, who is spoken of as a "dear father" and a "most beloved master," and the man of thoroughly pious soul, who "shudders" when ignorantly charged with heresy, who calls sin by its right name in monks or prelates, and lives in the thought of Divine judgment and Divine mercy. He describes himself through life as "rejoicing to serve the Supreme Loving-kindness," and, student as he is, comes regularly to the daily services, and is supposed to have said in his sweet way that the angels must not find him absent. In his last hours he combines a loving trust in God and a "desire to be with Christ," with a sense of awfulness of the "need-fare" and the doom. He spends his last minutes of working power in dictating an English version of St. John's Gospel, calls his work "finished" when the last sentence has been written, and passes away with his head resting on a pupil's hands, with his eyes fixed on his wonted place of devotion, with the "Gloria" to the Trinity as the last utterance of his lips.

One extract from his writings must suffice as an example of his history. It shall be the well-known story of the conversion of King Edwin about fifty years before the birth of Bede. At a conference summoned by Edwin, a Thane came forward and said, "To what, O King, shall I liken the life of man? When you are feasting with your Thanes in the depth of winter, and the hall is warm with the blazing fire, and all around the wind is raging and the snow falling, there cometh a sparrow and flies through the hall, enters at one door and escapes at the other. For a moment within she feeleth not the storm, for a moment she is visible to the eyes, but when a little moment of rest is passed, as she came out of the darkness of the storm, so she glides again

into the same darkness, and passeth away from our eyes. So is human life ; we behold it for an instant, but of what goeth before or what is to follow after, wot we not at all. Wherefore if the new religion can teach this wonderful secret, if these strangers can tell us aught, hearken to them and follow their law." Paulinus was called in to explain the doctrines of the gospel. Coifi, the high priest of Woden, himself demolishes the altar and idols, and the conversion of Northumbria follows.

SECTION IV¹

CHARLEMAGNE OR KARL

THE most striking personage of the latter half of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century was Charlemagne or Charles the Great, or Karl, as he is variously called.

The virtues of such a character are mingled with defects. They are virtues of a rough kind. They resemble those of the heroes of the Book of Judges, of Gideon, of Jephthah or Barak. A character like this must be measured not by our age, but by the age in which he lived, when there was no settled government for a large part of Christendom, but things were as yet in chaos and confusion. He must be judged by another standard than our own. The length of his reign was forty-seven years, and during it his empire had grown into something like the dominion of the Cæsars. He had received the Frank kingdom from his father, but when he died his rule extended from the Atlantic to the plains of Hungary and

¹ The bulk of this section is abridged from Guizot's *History of Civilization*, Vol. II. Lecture xx, and Church's *Beginnings of the Middle Ages*, ch. vii.

Poland, from the Baltic to Spain and to Italy, Sicily and Dalmatia.

I will select a few of the most striking points in his character and in his career.

He was crowned at Rome on Christmas Day, 800, by Pope Leo III. It is a date easy to remember, and a landmark in history. He was chosen and thrice proclaimed Emperor, and all saw in his matchless power, and in their own unanimity, the hand of God.

I will consider him under three heads—

(1) As a Warrior and Conqueror.

(2) As a Legislator.

(3) His influence on learning, as a protector and encourager of sciences, letters and arts.

(1) As to his wars. Karl, in all, made fifty-three expeditions. The special feature of his wars was the indomitable pertinacity with which he carried them to the end, and the untiring alacrity and rapidity with which he moved from one point to another. His kingdom was beset by the Saxons between the Rhine and the Elbe, and by the Saracens in Spain. But the Saxon war was far the most serious. It was chequered by grave disasters, and it lasted continuously, with its stubborn and ever-recurring resistance, its cruel devastations, its winter campaigns, its merciless acts of vengeance, for thirty-two years (772–804). The subjugation of the Saxons more resembled, in its systematic completeness, the policy followed by the kinsmen of the Saxons in Britain than anything else which had been seen on the Continent. But it decided finally and for good the question in Germany between heathenism and Christianity, between continued barbarism or the first steps to civilization.

At this period we see the wandering life ceasing throughout the interior of Europe; populations established themselves; property became fixed; and the relations of men no longer varied from day to day at the will of violence or chance.

(2) The government of Karl is more difficult to

sum up than his wars. His legislation is most wide and extensive. His great idea is to civilize his people, to introduce order and unity, to foster all that seemed healing and hopeful in the state of things round him.

Then again we notice his alliance with the Church as the only power then capable of teaching and enforcing morality. But he also interfered largely and wisely, too, in religious matters, and put down corrupt practices.

The following are some provisions of his religious legislation :—

“Let care be taken not to venerate the names of false martyrs, or the memory of doubtful saints.”

“Let no one suppose that God is only to be prayed to in three languages, for God is adored in all languages, and man is heard if he ask just things.”

“Let preaching always be performed in such a manner that the common people may be able to understand it thoroughly.”

These provisions have generally a character of good sense, and of liberty of mind.

(3) If we look at the efforts of Karl in behalf of learning, we see the same spirit, the spirit of civilization. He was keenly alive to the depressed state of knowledge in his time. Early in his reign he collected about him in his palace the best scholars he could attract, and made them his familiar friends. The most considerable of them was Alcuin. Alcuin came over from the school of York in 782, and remained, with a short interval, on the Continent till his death in 804. By such help Karl tried to improve his own knowledge, and to raise the standard of acquirement round him. He learned to speak Latin with facility, and he understood better than he spoke, Greek; he was passionately fond of old German songs and lays. He tried late in life, but without success, to acquire what was then the professional art of writing. It was his custom to be read to at meals;

and his favourite book was St. Augustine's *City of God*.

Alcuin corrected and restored the manuscripts of ancient literature, and revised the Bible. He taught in the schools that Karl established. These were of various kinds, parochial schools, monastic, cathedral, and schools of the palace, which accompanied the Emperor wherever he went.

Another celebrated man of his reign was Eginhard, who wrote the annals of his time, and the *Life of Karl*.

Under his fostering care monasteries were not merely a shelter and a refuge, and a centre from which radiated the humanizing influences of the farm and the garden, but schools of useful learning. He made many and liberal grants of land to them.

It was his aim that the clergy and monks of his realm should be like his feudal retainers, a compact, well-drilled spiritual militia; the monks in their cells, and the clergy in their several dioceses, were all to live by rule—the rule of the monastic order, or the rule canonical.

And on what did his empire mainly rest? Chiefly on this, that he was the ally and champion of the Church. This was the main pillar and buttress of his state. But we must not disguise his faults. He was one of those who think they know enough, and have strength enough to mould the world at their will. With strong affections and wide sympathies, he was imperious and masterful; and his too ambitious and sometimes unscrupulous attempts sowed the seeds of mischief to come. Clement and placable as he was in peace, his wars were ferocious, and his policy after conquest unsparing. He was in earnest in his religion, and there was much in it not only of earnestness, but of intelligence. But it was not complete or deep enough to exclude waywardness and inconsistency. At the same time we must regard him as a great instrument for good in the hands of

God, much as the Judges in the Old Testament were raised up to carry out the work called for in their rough time.

His last year he spent in much study of the Scriptures, in prayers and acts of charity.

At last the great Emperor died, being seized by a fever, which, old as he now was, and worn out by many labours both in war and peace, he was unable to resist.

Some little description of his person may not be out of place. He was of a tall and strong person, being seven feet in height, with an open countenance. His eyes were large and piercing. He was of pleasant speech, and could speak other tongues besides his own. He was, in truth, a very noble and mighty prince.

So Karl died on January 24, in the year 814. His last words were: "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit" (Psalm xxxi. 5). He was buried in the basilica, the church which he had built at Aachen, adorned with marbles brought from Rome and Ravenna. And many years after, the sepulchral chamber being opened, the body of the Emperor was found seated on a throne as if he yet lived, clothed with imperial robes, bearing on his head a crown, and grasping a sceptre, while by his side lay his sword, and on his knees was a book of the Gospels.

It has been finely said that "he stands alone like a beacon upon a waste, or a rock in the broad ocean. His reign affords a solitary resting-place between two long periods of turbulence and ignominy."¹

Stained though he was with some vices, he is wonderfully enlightened when contrasted with the barbarian world around him.

¹ Hallam's *Middle Ages*, Vol. I. ch. i.

SECTION V

ALFRED

CERTAINLY the most remarkable personage in the latter half of the ninth century was Alfred.

Every Englishman and Englishwoman (it has been said) is the greater and the better for the greatness of King Alfred.

Among the chief places with which his name is associated are : *Wantage*, where he was born in 849 ; *Reading*, where the first battle was fought against the Danes, who had sailed up the Thames and seized the piece of land at its junction with the Kennet ; *Englefield*, where a Danish troop was driven back on the main army ; *Ashdown*, on the Ridgeway upon the Berkshire Downs, where a great slaughter took place and the Danes were driven back to their fort at Reading, and thence retired to Basing, *Athelney* and *Winchester*, where his remains lie buried.

I cannot dwell at length on that long conflict with these terrible foes. I do not intend to go through the various stages in his life ; I merely glance at the King's hiding himself in Athelney, in Somersetshire, till his hour of victory came. The peace of Wedmore in 878 is the first halting-place. Alfred knew that his land must have rest, and that the Danes could not be turned out of England. Guthrun, their King, was baptized, and the Danes agreed to retire to the east and north of England. The heathen Danes were to leave the country. Peace was thus given at last to our country, so long harassed, and it lasted for nearly thirteen years, a peace bought by blood and suffering and courage.

The Christian English gradually civilized the

¹ My acknowledgments for much of this section are due to several publications at the time of the Alfred Millenary, especially to "Alfred as King" by Frederic Harrison, in Booker's *Chapters on the Life and Times of Alfred*.

fierce Danes. And they took to Christianity in a wonderful manner, after they had once been humbled.

"We were all despoiled" (he says in his will) "by the heathen folk." He found the enemy with a standing army, and he met this by instituting a regular militia and a reserve force. And a navy, an adequate fleet, the command of the Channel—he was the founder of that also.

"I have desired" (he says) "to live worthily while I lived, and after my life to leave to the men that should be after me a remembrance in good works."

Never in any history was such a restoration of the people, such a wise and perfect scheme of civilization, worked out as that of Alfred. For his people had been going from bad to worse under the constant pressure of Danish marauders. The earlier civilization had died out; the clergy were ignorant; the people, of course, no better.¹ Alfred's first step was to gather round him the best and ablest men he could find, not only in England, but from abroad. With these men he formed a sort of council, and left nothing alone in State or Church, for one class or for another, for war or peace, till he had reformed it to the highest pitch of which it was capable. Bit by bit the land was regenerated. But there were no books! How were people to learn? How were the teachers to learn? This he set to work to remedy himself, for he had been well grounded during his childhood and youth. We have a proverb, "If you want a thing done well, do it yourself." That was his method before he was called off to active life, and he spared no pains to improve his Latin that he might utilize his knowledge for the good of his people. Four books he chose for the purpose—four Latin books² which he and

¹ "He was the spiritual and intellectual leader of his people" (Freeman).

² (1) Some of the works of Pope Gregory the Great, (2) Orosius for general history, (3) Bede's *English History*, and (4) Boëthius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.

his friends translated into the Saxon of his time. "Why not the Bible?" some may say. But that was impossible in Alfred's time, nor indeed did we get the Bible in our native tongue, in its entirety, for five hundred years later.

So night and day the great king studied and wrote and laboured at the work. We know how he invented a plan for marking time by a horn lamp for his night-work. The days were far too short for what he had to do. Nothing can be more touching than the remarks scattered throughout his translations. Under all this energy, with the assistance of his selected teachers, schools rose up, new monasteries were built or restored in places where special darkness covered the long-harassed land.

And how was it that, born as he was apparently to failure, he became the greatest man in English history? We cannot account for it merely by his being the son of a good father and mother, and having received a good education. That was a great start in life, but with Alfred it was a mere start. We must look to his personal history, as judged by his deeds and by his writings. He was a man of earnest personal religion from his youth. Let us begin with that. There is no mistake about it. Again, he had the advantage of early responsibility. Again, he was trained in adversity. It is difficult to conceive a more frightful condition than his when he had to fly to Athelney, and dropped the jewel from his helmet. Acts of desperate, undaunted courage, one after another, hardened what might have been too soft a metal. Religion and culture refined it to the finest temper. He was never idle, never too proud to learn. He despised no capable assistance. He saw the effect of his own energetic spirit showing itself all round him. That was no slight reward. He required that encouragement, for we have not yet considered the most potent influence of all in forming his exalted character—his terrible and recurring disease.

We do not know exactly what it was, but it was, perhaps, some lingering form of epilepsy. Thus life had no such sweets to him that he cared much how long it lasted. It was to him the brief time granted to serve his generation, and he would make the very best of it. Certainly no king ever gave himself up more thoroughly than Alfred did fully to do the duties of his office. His whole life seems to have been spent in doing all that he could for the good of his people in every way. And it is wonderful in how many ways his powers showed themselves. If he was a brave warrior he was many other things besides. He was a law-giver—at least he collected and arranged the laws, and caused them to be most carefully administered. He was a scholar, and wrote and translated many books for the good of his people. He encouraged trade and enterprise of all kinds, and sent men to visit distant parts of the world and bring home accounts of what they saw. And he was a thoroughly good man and a devout Christian in all relations of life. In short, one hardly knows any other character in all history so perfect, there is so much that is good in so many different ways; and though, no doubt, Alfred had his faults like other people, yet he clearly had none, at any rate in the greater part of his life, which took away at all seriously from his general goodness. One wonders that such a man was never canonized as a saint. "Most certainly many people have received the title who did not deserve it nearly so well as he did."¹ Alfred, in short, was "a victorious warrior whose victories have left no curses behind them; a king whom no man ever charged with a harsh act; a soldier who never became a pedant; a Churchman who knew no superstition; a hero as bold as Lancelot, as spotless as Galahad."²

¹ Freeman's *Old English History*, ch. viii. 5.

² F. Harrison.

Three features in his character stand out prominently—

(1) His love of truth and uprightness.

(2) His work for others. Alfred lived for others. He lived for his people. He strove to infuse into them—little worthy as they sometimes proved themselves of such a champion—his own gallant spirit. He gave great alms to the poor and gifts to the Churches. He also founded two monasteries, one for nuns at Shaftesbury, the other for monks at Athelney.

(3) His perseverance. Weak in body, and little fit to cope with the appalling fatigues of his position, still he went on and was undaunted.

Parts of Wordsworth's *The Happy Warrior* seem exactly to suit the character of Alfred.

“Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous spirit, who when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright.

Who doomed to go in company with pain
And fear and bloodshed; miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain.

Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire.

Who with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse,—to his wish or not,—
Plays in the many games of life that one,
Where what he most doth value must be won.”

SECTION VI

ST. ANSELM—ST. BERNARD

IT is not easy to say when the Dark Ages end or when the Middle Ages begin, but the year 1200 is generally chosen, so that the former period would include two men of great learning and holiness—Anselm (1033–1109 A.D.), and Bernard (1091–1153 A.D.). Anselm, the father of the mediæval theology, the Abbot of Bec, made Archbishop of Canterbury against his will, whose dispute with William Rufus, carried on to the next reign, cost him years of exile and much suffering, is a very interesting character. But he is not so distinctly representative of the continuity of Christian life as to call for a fuller treatment in this volume.

I will therefore devote this section to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

For more than a thousand years, speaking very roughly, one may say that there was no goodness but saintly goodness, no institutions tending to edification, but such as were ascetic and monastic, and no biography but hagiology, the narrative of the lives of the saints. From the fall of the Roman Empire to the Reformation, the Church is the one subject worth studying.

St. Bernard is a strong instance of this, and among Churchmen of his time he stands out pre-eminently.

Had any one been asked in the beginning of the twelfth century where he should find the man of greatest influence, what would have been the answer? Not on the Papal throne, nor on the thrones of England or France, not among the great archbishops on the Rhine. He must have turned away from the capitals of the chief kingdoms, such as they then were, to a secluded monastery in the east of France, to the abbot who was venerated as the oracle of God and the guiding spirit of the age.

The popes of Bernard's time (excepting Urban II) were none of them men of mark, but the power and prestige of the Papacy were great, and his influence on it is most remarkable.

For half the twelfth century the pope ceases to be the centre around whom gather the great events of Christian history,¹ towards whom converge the religious thoughts of men. Bernard of Clairvaux, now rising to the height of his power and influence, is at once the leading and the governing head of Christendom. He rules alike the monastic world, in all the multiplying and more severe convents which were springing up in every part of Europe, the councils of temporal sovereigns, and the intellectual developments of the age. He is peopling all these convents with thousands of ardent votaries of every rank and order; he heals the schism in the Papacy; he preaches a new crusade, in which a king and an emperor lead the armies of the Cross; he is believed by an admiring age to have confuted Abélard.

Bernard was born of noble parentage in Burgundy. His father, Tecelin, was a man of great bravery and unimpeachable honour and justice; his mother, Alith, likewise of high birth, was a model of devotion and charity.

The world was open to the youth of high birth, beautiful person, graceful manners, irresistible influence. The Court would at once have welcomed a young knight, so endowed, with her highest honours, her most intoxicating pleasures; the Church would have trained a noble disciple so richly gifted for her most powerful bishoprics or her wealthiest abbeys. But he closed his eyes upon the world, on the worldly Church, with stern determination. He became at once master of his passions.

He inquired for the poorest, the most inaccessible, the most austere of monasteries. It was that of

¹ Abridged from Milman's *Latin Christianity*, Book VIII. ch. iv., and Morison's *Life of St. Bernard*.

Stephen Harding at Citeaux. He arrived at the gates, but not alone. Already his irresistible influence had drawn around him thirty followers, all equally resolute in the renunciation of secular life, in submission to the most rigorous discipline; some, men of middle life, versed in, but weary of, the world; most, like himself, youths of noble birth, with life untried and expanding in its most dazzling promise before them. But this was not all; his mother's vow must be fulfilled. One after the other the strange and irresistible force of his character enthralled his brothers, and at length his sister.

After spending some time in the severest convent of his age, at the age of twenty-five Bernard was chosen leader of twelve monks, who were sent forth to found a new monastery.

The site of this new abbey was, when they reached it, called the Valley of Wormwood. It was surrounded by pathless forests, untilled, uncleared, a haunt of banditti; and it was not until after many months of hard manual labour that Bernard and his monks wrung even their daily bread from the stony soil, or contrived any shelter for themselves from the weather. During their work they were silent, or sang hymns in chorus; and, as they thus toiled and praised God, many who passed by felt the solemn influence of their devotions and industry; the new abbey rose to the sound of sacred song, and in time the Valley of Wormwood was transformed into the bright Valley Clairvaux. There was planted a vine, which spread its branches far and wide, and bore fruit in many lands. In our own, *e.g.* the first Cistercians settled in Surrey in 1128, and a little later, in Yorkshire, the noble Fountains Abbey was founded by them, and their piety woke the Benedictines from the lethargy into which they were sinking. Clairvaux was henceforth Bernard's home, and here, as in the father's home of their childhood, his five brothers, and at

length his aged father, were again united under one roof.

Many of the fine old forest trees still remained, and Bernard said that the beeches and oaks were often his teachers, and that he had frequently learned more from trees and rocks than from books.

Clairvaux and that woodland oratory were, however, only resting-places in the pauses of a most busy life. He moved freely about in the world, and when he retreated to his abbey the men and women he had helped and counselled followed him thither in person or with letters, and made his retirement only the centre of fresh labours. It is well known how fervently he preached the *Second Crusade*, and how all Europe was stirred by his appeals; how assembled multitudes throbbed with a common impulse as that emaciated frame and those "dove-like" yet flashing eyes silently enforced the pleadings of that eloquent voice. Kings and burghers, peaceful men and blood-stained warriors, peasant and noble, the criminal and the devout, wept together, and took on them the badge of the Cross. But perhaps it is not so well known how Bernard looked on this pilgrimage chiefly as the means of spiritual awakening, and valued even the recovery of the sepulchre from the infidel little in comparison with the recovery of souls from Satan. When he had aroused any, by means of these appeals, to the deeper enthusiasm of the true spiritual crusade to be carried on at home, he deemed the work far higher. Strongly does it testify to his Christlike character, that, when a fanatical monk endeavoured to turn the crusading enthusiasm against the Jews, Bernard threw his whole heart into endeavours to check the ferocities which ensued, and he did not rest until he had stopped the persecution.

Constantly he acted as a mediator between the oppressor and the oppressed.

From the schism in the Papal See between

Innocent II and Anacletus II his life is the history of the Western Church.

Both the King of France and the Prelates imperatively required the presence of Bernard, the holy Abbot of Clairvaux. Bernard arrived, torn reluctant and not without fear from his tranquil seclusion. The whole assembly, the King and the Prelates, referred the decision of this momentous question to him alone. Thus was Bernard in one day the arbiter of the religious destinies of Christendom.

At Chartres, another monarch, Henry I of England, acknowledged Innocent as the legitimate successor of St. Peter. The influence of Bernard had overruled the advice of the English Prelates, and brought this second kingly spiritual vassal, though reluctant, to the feet of Innocent. "Thou fearest the sin of acknowledging Innocent: answer thou for thy other sins, be that upon my head." Such was the language of Bernard to the King of England.

The next year the Emperor and the Pope advanced to Rome, Bernard still by the side of the conquering Pontiff. Anacletus did not venture to defend the city; he retired beyond the Tiber, occupied the Vatican, and maintained the castle of St. Angelo.

But Bernard was enabled to return for a time to his beloved Abbey of Clairvaux. There, seated in a bower formed of a trellis-work of sweet-peas, which he had himself planted, he strove, as he says himself, "to repair the losses of my spiritual studies, and the ruffling of the spirit's tranquillity, which I have experienced outside my walls."

Of the notable encounter between Abélard and Bernard,—the condemnation of the philosopher to silence, and his retirement to Cluny and his final reconciliation with Bernard, I do not propose to speak. Nor can I dwell on the Second Crusade preached by St. Bernard, beyond saying that he put his whole soul into this object. But in spite of its

being taken up by Louis VII of France, and Conrad of Germany, it proved a disastrous failure.

The writings of St. Bernard are too remote from us in style to be very much read now. Here, however, is a short specimen from his sermons—

“The faithful priest is he who regards with dove-like simplicity all the wealth which passes through his hands, whether it be the benefits bestowed by God upon men or the offerings of men to God. He keeps back nothing for himself, for he seeks not the gifts of the people, but their good ; not his own glory, but the glory of God. The talent which he has received he does not enfold in a napkin, but distributes among the money-changers, from whom he receives the interest not for himself, but for his Lord.”

His hymns are of interest, and one of our favourite ones, “Jesu, the very thought of Thee,” is a translation from him, or at least is based on his Latin words.

But it is on his *character* that we should most dwell. There have been other men, Augustine and Luther for instance, who by their words and writings have ploughed deeper and more lasting furrows in the great field of the Church, but probably no man during his lifetime ever exercised a *personal* influence in Christendom equal to that of St. Bernard. For he was the stayer of popular commotions, the queller of heresies, the umpire between princes and kings, the counsellor of popes, the founder (for so he may be esteemed) of an important religious order, the author of a crusade. Besides all deeper qualities which would not alone have sufficed to effect all this, he was gifted by nature and grace with rarest powers of *persuasion*.

Towards the end of his life in 1153, when he was sixty-two, he had lost many of his dearest friends. Public affairs ceased at last to interest him. The marvellous brain which for a whole generation had

grasped and influenced every question and every event in Europe, fell by degrees into a peaceful repose. His cousin, a bishop, could not attract his attention. "Marvel not," said the dying saint, "I am already no longer of this world."

Raising up his dove-like eyes, he said with his last words that he only wished God's will might be done.

PART IV

THE LATTER PART OF THE MIDDLE AGES

SECTION I

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI¹

"Having nothing and yet possessing all things."
A strange paradox! but true, if of any one, of St. Francis—of all the saints of Mediæval Christendom the best known and best loved by the outer world. This is due partly to his singularly lovable nature, and partly to the simplicity and directness of his aims.

He was inspired as much as any man ever may be, but one must not study him apart from the age in which he lived, and the conditions of his time.

We have, then, to understand something of the religious state of Italy about the year 1200: how it influenced his thought, how it urged him on to the path that he finally entered. We may at once put away all ideas of self-seeking from our idea of him. He desired and believed his life to be an imitation of Jesus Christ, and this conviction that he was but an imitator kept him from all temptation of pride. He was the humblest of men. He desired to do all the good he could in his generation, and to rescue it from its evils. What were those evils?

The clergy were corrupt (benefices were put up

¹ Based on the work of M. Paul Sabatier, and Mrs. Stoddart's Life.

to the highest bidder). Bribes were common. One fact will speak volumes. A Pope, Eugenius III, was offered gold by a priest to avoid a law suit brought against him, and he is praised extravagantly for refusing it—showing how frequent was the practice of receiving such bribes.

The monastic orders had lost their reputation for sanctity. They encouraged or even extorted inheritances from the dying; they became rich and luxurious. Preaching was neglected. Public worship became a sort of magic formula.

Of course all was not corrupt. The great mass of the people were superstitious and ignorant; relics were venerated in an absurd manner. But still there were some purer spirits struggling for a reformation. Reform, a return to poverty, was in the air.

There was also the movement of the Poor Men of Lyons, as they were called, the followers of Peter Waldo, who preached repentance and obedience to Christ's commands. These men help us to understand the rapid spread of the Franciscan preaching, for Francis, while a child, a boy, and a youth, would often have heard of them.

And then what manner of man was the Pope, at this time, to whom surely all should have looked for a pattern and example, who should have cheered and uplifted the world, at that dark period? It was Innocent III. He was not vicious, as some of those who have sat on the Papal throne have been. But the words which most describe him are, arrogant and ambitious. He was a man of calm dignity, self-possessed, of audacious pretensions. He prepared the Papacy for the Inquisition, and the system of espionage which made it so odious. Francis and Innocent! The greatest of contrasts! In the chair of St. Peter, the world incarnate; at its foot, the one man who believed that Christ's Rule was the only Rule possible for the health of men. To the Papal Court that Rule was foolishness. To the soul of

Francis none was so wise or so much to be desired.

There is hardly a hill in Central Italy that has not preserved some memento of St. Francis. It would be hard to walk half a day between Florence and Rome without coming upon some hut on a hillside bearing his name or that of one of his disciples.

Think, then, what this means. What love and affection it implies. His life was not a long one: he died in his forty-fourth year. Short, however, as it was, we cannot do more than select some of its chief stages and incidents. Much no doubt that is legendary, and not to be trusted, has grown up around his name, but still much remains which is beyond question.

Francis, son of Pier Bernardone, was born at Assisi in Umbria in the year 1182. His father was a merchant. The merchants of that time were rising everywhere into importance, and M. Sabatier has reminded us of the conspicuous part which they played in the Middle Ages, travelling with their valuable wares in strong companies from market to market, from castle to castle. It was not only their silks and velvets that made them welcome, but also their knowledge of what was going on in the countries traversed by their caravans. And what was the news most eagerly looked for? It was religious news.

Of his childhood we know very little. Legends gathered round the story of his infancy.

We may set down to a strain of gentle birth the fact that he preferred the beautiful, the romantic, to the homely realities of life. As he passed from boyhood to youth, these tastes became so marked as to single him out, even amongst the young nobles of Assisi, for fastidiousness in food, dress, and personal cleanliness. His gaiety, his graciousness, his genius, and the wealth which enabled him to go choicely clad, made him their favourite companion. But nearly every biographer testifies to the purity of his life. As

he shrank from the coarser adjuncts of existence, so he shrank from vice. With that sensitive sympathy for sorrow which belonged to a nature responsive to every human emotion, he was prone to constant charity, even in those days of careless mirth and festivity.

In 1202 Assisi was involved in war with the neighbouring town of Perugia. Francis himself served in the cavalry with his townsmen. In an encounter that took place midway between the two cities, the foes returned to Perugia with the spoils of victory and with many prisoners. Amongst them was Francis. While the others lamented and grumbled, he retained his cheerfulness and made plans of adventure for the future.

After their fellow-townsmen had suffered a year's imprisonment, the Assisians agreed to submit the difference to arbitration. So about the end of 1203 Francis returned to Assisi with his fellow captives. Weakened physically by captivity, he could not stand the strain of an outbreak of dissipation, and fell seriously ill. For weeks he lay in danger, but his mother's prayers and nursing helped him through the crisis.

When he was once more able to walk he took the level road leading to Porta Nuova. He tried to recover his former rapture in the scene, but could not do so. His very love of natural beauty had lost its thrill. Restored to health, he resumed his rich vestments. One evening he found an old acquaintance reduced to beggary. He dismounted and clothed him in his own rich mantle, providing for his immediate wants.

Warned by a vision, he gave up wealth and sought lonely paths and retreats, and found a sheltering cave. One day a leper accosted him as he rode along one of the ancient ways. The man seemed hardly human, and for a moment Francis shrank from so gruesome a spectacle. But recalling Christ's gentleness to

lepers, and his own contrition for that leprosy of the soul which he believed himself to have contracted, he dismounted and embraced the mendicant, kissing the disfigured hand, which he filled with money. And then, as he regained his seat, he looked round for the leper, who had vanished. From that day he was aware of a new vision flitting through his vigils, haunting his dreams—the vision of Poverty. He pondered over this vision until it sank into his very soul. Poverty, he thought, had been the Bride of Christ, and it should be his.

One day Francis went down the rough path which leads to the small sanctuary of San Damiano. It was falling to pieces from neglect. This must be his work—to repair God's sanctuaries and to make them fit for His presence. His purse was nearly empty. He was used to take what costly stuffs he needed for his own clothing. His father was not in his shop, so he took some pieces of the finest cloths and silks, made them into a parcel, mounted his horse and rode to Foligno, ten miles away. There he sold both merchandise and horse, and came back to San Damiano on foot, intent on taking up his abode with its priest and on providing for its repair. I need not dwell on the scene of his father's anger, and his cruel treatment of his son. In vain he then tried promises of wealth and indulgence, if he would return to him. But Francis said, "I desire no other wealth than the Poverty of Christ." "Then," said his father, "that thou shalt have. Come with me before the Bishop and renounce all right to thy mother's dowry, all claim to what I might have given thee."

Francis gladly followed him with a crowd of citizens pressing round the Bishop's palace. Francis went into a room, stripped himself of all he wore, and returned with a bundle of his garments, which he handed to his father, saying: "Now have I no father for ever, but our Father who is in Heaven." The Bishop, moved to tears, embraced him and covered him

with his own mantle until a servant brought a coarse tunic in which to clothe him.

Thus Francis had given up father and mother and wealth for Christ's sake. We can only guess what that meant to his tender heart ; but the sacrifice was complete ; he was now Christ's alone.

He was bent on restoring the three churches fallen into disrepair, and set about collecting stones from the citizens, for which he paid by singing like a wandering minstrel. Some of them maintained that he was mad, and his sorest trial was meeting his father Bernardone, who never failed to curse him. For some time he laboured at his double charge of repairing the churches and of tending the lepers. Day after day he toiled down from the quarries with his burden of stones and mortar, and fitted them into the breaches made by the storms and by time and rough usage.

One day he heard read in the Gospel for the day : " As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils ; freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves ; for the workman is worthy of his meat."

He listened with wonder ; it was an endorsement of the rule of poverty. It was the new direction from above, and the voice was the voice of Christ.

His first three followers, humble and teachable men, were Peter of Assisi, Bernard and Egidio. The passages read in the church of St. Nicholas were adopted as their Rule, and so they proceeded to obey its injunctions. This was the only Rule whose vital importance Francis ever recognized.

Francis took Egidio with him, Bernard's companion was Peter. From village to village, from city to city, from castle to castle, climbing the hills and visiting every corner where humble homes were built, the missionaries called to repentance, exhorted to the

life of holiness, and proclaimed the Kingdom of God.

They had just entered upon a crisis, which only such an invincible attitude as his could withstand. Three others joined the brotherhood, men who sold all they had, gave it to the poor, and came down to the plain. The matter was becoming serious. Those who expected to inherit were indignant. There was a reaction against Francis and his followers. Even the Bishop was alarmed, for the dissipation of large sums amongst the needy was no gain to the Church, and might disturb her authority.

After this, being forbidden to preach in Assisi, he decided on taking a step of the utmost importance. To silence rancorous tongues, and to avoid failure, he must be possessed of undoubted authority. He determined on going to Rome to get this authority from the Pope. He wrote out his Rule, and called together a small band of companions. These twelve poor men took their way southwards in August 1210. His first interview with Pope Innocent was disappointing, but he gave him another, after a dream in which he saw the Church of St. John Lateran in danger. It seemed to be falling to the ground, except for a poor man who bore up its walls. So he sent for him again, and granted his Order authority as preachers and missionaries, making Francis Superior of the Brothers Minor, who were to submit to the tonsure. Their long delay in Rome ended at last. They might have perished on their return had not a traveller given them food. In their simplicity they did not realize that the strong hand of the Pope was upon them.

We pass over a long period, eight years of increase, and five years of trouble. During these last, 1218-1223, he followed Frederic II in his crusade, passing through the Holy Land, and preaching and making disciples. But in his absence serious changes were made in his Rule, introducing property and possessions

which he had forbidden, and this grieved him much. Let us hasten on to the close of his life, and to the wonderful events of the Stigmata, with which the name of St. Francis will ever be connected.

He had spent weeks in prayer and fasting, his whole spirit absorbed with the sorrow of the Cross. No man on earth ever realized so keenly as did Francis what the Man of Sorrows suffered before His crucifixion, and God's gift of the marks of that final agony was the Divine recognition of his martyrdom. They were bestowed upon him suddenly, while praying for union with Christ's sufferings. His face was turned towards the dawn, and a light more radiant than common shone upon him. For down its rays there sped a vision of One nailed to a cross, flying to him with wings that beat the air, while two wings covered his head and two his feet. A moment the marvel rested above him while he gazed, and then words fell from his lips, and he understood that his martyrdom was accepted, his prayer granted. When the glory faded he found upon hands and feet and side the marks of the Lord's body. From a wound on his right side oozed a few drops of blood, and through his hands and feet were fleshy growths, black in colour and piercing from side to side. They resembled nails exactly.

As to the credibility of this story three things may be said :—

First, there is very strong evidence that something very remarkable did happen.

Secondly, unusual states of mind can produce great changes in the body, and this gives a presumption for belief that the account of the Stigmata may have a literal truth in it.

Thirdly, the marks are said to have been seen by fifty brethren at one time in the lifetime of Francis, though he himself hid them. Also after his death.

In his last illness St. Clare, a lady of Assisi of noble birth who had founded a sisterhood, nursed him

during the last fortnight. He was now quite blind, but desired more solitude. Clare with her own hands built a large hut of reeds and rushes in her garden, to which he was removed.

One day he sat at table with the sisters and talked to St. Clare. Then he passed into a rapture away from them all. The Spirit was come upon him and he uttered his *Canticle of the Sun*.

Afterwards he composed a new stanza for his canticle :—

“Praised be Thou, O my Lord, for those who forgive for love
of Thee,
And who bear infirmities and tribulations ;
Blessed are those who endure in peace,
For by Thee, O most High, shall they be crowned.”

He addressed a letter to all Christians, whether clergy or laity, whether men or women, to all who live throughout the world. He ended thus : “ I, Brother Francis, your little servant, I pray and conjure you by that love which is God—I, ready to kiss your feet—to receive with humility and love these words and all others which our Lord Jesus Christ has spoken, and to conform your conduct to them.

“Be Thou praised, O my Lord, for our Sister Death,
From whom the body of none living may escape.
Woe unto them who die in mortal sin ;
Blessed they who shall be found according to Thy most holy
will,
Unto whom the second death can do no hurt.”

This they sang, and ended with—

“Praise ye and bless my Lord,
And thank and serve Him with a great humility.”

After many entreaties and injunctions he ended with a solemn benediction. Then he dictated a testament for the Sisters of Poverty, blessing them too and commending them to the brethren as members of one family in Christ Jesus.

The end was near ; his thoughts were toward those whose spiritual life he had helped, who were dear to him as children to a father. Psalms were sung to him, and from time to time he joined in, and chanted with special fondness Psalm cxlii. He forgave the errors and faults of all his brethren, present and absent. On the evening of October 3, 1226, a flock of crested larks alighted singing on the thatch of his cell. When night fell Francis had gone to the presence of his Lord.

No wonder that with all his labours, his austerities and privations, he was worn out at the age of forty-four. Of more than middle height, Francis had a delicate and kindly face, black eyes, a soft and sonorous voice. There was in his whole person a delicacy and grace which made him infinitely lovely. All these characteristics are found in the most ancient portraits.

Invincible cheerfulness and light-heartedness was one great feature in his character. He differed in this from all before him. No gloomy asceticism was preached by him, no crusade against Rome, no upheaval of faith, no bewildering and terrible prophecies of a doom to come.

SECTION II

LANGLAND¹—CHAUCER

THERE are two poets who illustrate, each in their way, the fourteenth century. They are Geoffrey Chaucer and William Longland, or Langland, the author of *Piers the Plowman*. The latter is much less generally known than the former. He brings before

¹ For this account of Langland I am indebted to *Religious Thought in Old English Verse*, by the Rev. C. J. Abbey.

us the more sombre and melancholy side, as Chaucer does the more genial, happy side of life in England at this time.

Taken together, they present the best picture we have of the social condition and manners of England at their time. It is their religious aspect in which I speak of them.

There is far less poetry of a distinctively religious sort in Chaucer, while *The Vision of Piers the Plowman* is thoroughly religious.

It is a vision "of the origin, progress, and perfection of the Christian life," and in many places may remind the reader of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The times were thoroughly out of joint when he wrote. There was much suffering, discontent, and trouble, there was great and crying corruption in the Church, and throughout the commonwealth vices and abuses prevailed. All these greatly vexed the soul of a man of austere uprightness, whose sympathies were strong and deep, who loved from his heart truth and freedom, and who kept his eyes steadily fixed on the gospel model of life.

All classes were in his eyes rotten to the core. The clerical class was the worst of all. The hope of the poor is in the Crown alone. And thus, often with fervour of imagination, sometimes with real sublimity, always with vehement earnestness, and not unfrequently with biting humour, he vented his indignation against wrong, both among high and low, and pointed up to a higher ideal, and to the pure "Mansion of Truth."

He thinks the best of men; he believes in truth, and in doing to others as he would be done by. There is no pride in him. He takes sorrow and sickness as ministrations from Heaven. He is kind and helpful, free from anxieties, trusting in providence, full of good deeds, earnest in repentance.

"Of death and eke of dearth dread was he never ;
'Fiat voluntas tua' feasteth him."

Of Truth he says :

“ Truth is the throne where sits the Trinity.”

Of Love :

“ Love is most sovereign salve for soul and body,
The plant of peace, of all virtues most precious.

It is the lock of love that unlooseth grace,
That comforteth all creatures cumbered with sin ;
Love is the leech of life, looser of pain.”

Sometimes he makes Piers Plowman a sort of personification of the poor on earth, to whom Christ brought a special message of peace.

The Vision of Piers the Plowman seems to have been largely read among the lower classes. It is full of quotations from the Psalter, and much of it reminds one of the more sombre passages in the Psalms. Londoner as he is, his fancy flies far away from the sin and suffering of the great city, to a May morning in the Malvern Hills. “ I was very forwandered,” he says, “ and went me to rest under a broad bank by a burn side, and as I lay and leaned and looked in the water, I slumbered in a sleeping, it sounded so merry.” Just as Chaucer gathers the typical figures of the world he saw into his pilgrim train, so the dreamer gathers into a wide field his army of traders and chafferers, of hermits and solitaires, of minstrels, weavers and labourers, burgess and bondman, court-haunting bishops, and friars. Their pilgrimage is not to Canterbury, but to Truth ; their guide to Truth is neither clerk nor priest, but Peterkin the Ploughman, whom they find ploughing in his field. He it is, who bids the knight no more wrest gifts from his tenant nor misdo with the poor. “ Though he be thine underling here, well may hap in heaven, that he be worthier set, and with more bliss than thou.” The aim of the Ploughman is to work, and to make the world work with him. He warns the

labourer as he warns the knight. Hunger is God's instrument in bringing the idlest to toil, and hunger waits to work her will on the idler and waster.

All the darker and sterner aspects of the age, its social revolt, its moral and religious awakening, the misery of the peasant, the protest of the Lollard, are painted with a terrible fidelity in this poem of William Langland. Nothing brings more vividly home to us the social chasm which in the fourteenth century severed the rich from the poor than the contrast between the *Complaint of Piers the Ploughman* and the *Canterbury Tales*, with the world of wealth and ease and laughter through which the courtly Chaucer moves.

Wherever Chaucer does touch on religion, we are sure to find it pure and genuine. Two passages will prove this.

The first is where he implores his younger readers never to let earthly love so fill their minds, as to lose sight of the supreme example of divine and heavenly love—

“O young and freshé folkés, he or she,
In whom that love upgroweth with your age,
Repair ye home from worldly vanity,
And of your hearts upcast ye the viságe
To the great God, that after His imáge
Made you, and think ye all is but a fair,
This world that passeth soon, as flowers fair.

And to the soothfast Christ, that died on rood,
With all my heart for mercy do I pray,
And to the Lord right thus I speak and say—
‘Thou One and Two and Three, eterne in life,
From visible and invisible foe’n
Defend us in Thy mercy every one.’”

The other passage is that wonderful picture in the Prologue, of the poor parson, threadbare, learned and devout—

"A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a povré Persoun of a toun ;
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was alsó a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristés gospel trewely wolde preche ;
 His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient ;

Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lafte ná, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, mucche and lyte
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.—
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 Thet first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte ;
 Out of the gospel he the wordes caughte ;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold rusté, what shal iren do ?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste ;

To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his bisnesse :

A better preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
 He wayted after, no pompe and reverence,
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
 But Cristés lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve."

Here we have the great truth that any religion is corrupt, which does not make for practical righteousness, which does not place on men as the first necessity, that they shall be upright, pure and self-denying. And there is a further interest attaching to those lines. It is this, that in them we have a portrait of the ideal parish priest as imagined by the great herald of the Reformation. For Chaucer was a contemporary of Wiclif, and very probably when writing this passage, he was fixing his thoughts on him, "the Morning Star of the Reformation."

SECTION III¹

TAULER—T. À KEMPIS—THEOLOGIA GERMANICA

ONE of the earliest forerunners of the Reformation on the Continent was *John Tauler*. He was born at Strassburg about 1300, and at eighteen entered a Dominican cloister. He went to study at Paris, but, as he said, the doctors of Paris were ever turning over the leaves of huge books. They cared not for the one *Book of Life*. So he returned to Strassburg, where he was allowed to officiate, although the Bishop had laid the city under the cruel tyranny of an *Interdict*. The bells were silent, the churches were closed, the ordinary offices of religion were superseded. The blessings of religion were withheld from the many for the sins—or what the Pope and the Bishops chose to call the sins—of the few. In 1339, however, Tauler had to fly to Basle, where he preached in German instead of Latin, striving to be as plain and simple as possible. Basle was then the head-quarters of the revivalist society who called themselves the *Friends of God*, and said God was not to be worshipped in the Church alone or by the Clergy alone, or in the Ritual alone. He was with it, in heart and life.

A few years later, he returned to Strassburg, which was suffering under the scourge of the Black Death, and was devoted in his ministrations.

But he was to undergo a sterner trial. In Strassburg appeared a stranger who five times sat at the feet of Tauler, and listened to his preaching with serious, searching earnestness. He was a layman, he sought an interview with Tauler, confessed to him, received the Sacrament at his hands. He then expressed his wish that Tauler would preach how

¹ The first part of this section is borrowed from Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vol. ix. ch. 7, the latter part from the Introduction to *Theologia Germanica*, by Susanna Winkworth.

man could attain perfection, that perfection to which he might aspire on earth. Tauler preached his loftiest mysticism. The stern man now spoke with authority, the authority of a more determinate will, and more firm convictions. "Thou art yet in slavery to the letter ; thou knowest not the life-giving spirit ; thou art but a Pharisee ; thou trustest in thine own power, in thine own learning ; thou thinkest that thou seekest God's honour, and seekest thine own." Tauler shuddered. "Never man before reproved me for my sins." He felt the spell of a master. "Twelve years," said the layman, "I have been toiling to the height of spiritual perfection, which I have now attained, by the study of German writings, by self-mortification and chastisements which have now ceased to be necessary." He gave Tauler certain simple moral rules, counselled him to preach no more, to hear no more confession, to deny himself, and to meditate on the life and death of Christ, till he had attained humility and regeneration. The stronger, the more positive and peremptory mind subdued the gentler. Tauler, for above two years, despite the wonder of his friends and the taunts of his enemies, was silent. The first time, at the end of that period, when he attempted, under permission, he broke down in a flood of tears. This stranger was the famous *Nicolas of Basle*. The secret influence of these teachings, unsuppressed by years of persecution, may appear from the work thus wrought on the mind of Tauler.

He continued to preach to crowded congregations till his death in 1361. He was a philosopher and a mystic, but he was also a saint, and was practical. Some passages will show the depth and the purity of his thought.

"Works of love are more acceptable to God than lofty contemplation."

Separation from God is the source of all misery. Therein lies the pain of hell. The human soul can never cease to yearn and thirst after God ; "and the

greatest pain" of the lost "is that this longing can never be satisfied."

How blessed is the assurance that this higher self gives us access to a region where we may leave behind not only outward troubles and "the provoking of all men," but "the strife of tongues" in our own hearts, the chattering and growling of the "ape and tiger" within us, the recurring smart of old sins repented of, and the dragging weight of innate propensities! In this state the will, desiring nothing save to be conformed to the will of God, and separating itself entirely from all lower aims and wishes, claims the right of an immortal spirit to attach itself to eternal truth alone, having nothing in itself, and yet possessing all things in God.

"As a sculptor exclaimed on seeing a rude block of marble, what a godlike beauty thou hidest,—thus God looks upon a man, in whom God's own image is hidden."

The perfect man, according to Tauler, was a *social* being, not a *hermit*. His goodness spread abroad on earth, it was not all drawn up into heaven.

Different to this was the famous book on the *Imitation of Christ*.

Tauler is very little read or known in England, not as much as he deserves now, though among his countrymen his Sermons are still widely read, while the work of Thomas à Kempis has had a world-wide popularity. No book has been so often reprinted, or translated into so many languages as this. It can be purchased for a small price. We should like to know more about its reputed author, Thomas, of Kempen, near Dusseldorf, but probably there was little to tell, though he lived till the age of ninety-one; born in 1380 and dying in 1471.

We are told that he was simple in worldly affairs, shy and retiring in his habits, too absent-minded to be long entrusted with practical duties.

When he sang, one of his contemporaries says he

always raised his face to heaven, carried and borne beyond himself by the sweetness of the Psalms. He bowed before his Saviour, to catch the slightest whisper of His voice. The fruit of that close personal communion is the wonderful book in which throbs the heart of mediæval Christianity. From another book that he wrote, the *Soliloquy of the Soul*, we see that he won his religious calm only after long perplexity. "Dwell in solitude and silence, and therein shalt thou find great peace and a good conscience." "Be content with a few things." "Flee the conversation of worldly men." Such are its sentiments.

The *Imitation*, to quote Dean Milman, "might be easily held in the hand, carried about where no other book was borne—in the narrow cell or chamber, on the journey, into the solitude, among the crowd and throng of men, in prison. Its manner, its short, quivering sentences, went at once to the heart, and laid hold of and clung tenaciously to the memory with the compression and completeness of proverbs. It entirely supersedes and supplies the place of the spiritual teacher, the spiritual guide, the spiritual comforter; it is itself that teacher, guide, and comforter."

It is monastic, it is cloistral Christianity. It leaves no room for, or at least is silent on, social and domestic life. It hardly recognized duty to neighbours. It does not set before its readers a life of progress or utility. Such aims were foreign to those times. Christian patriotism, devotion to the good of mankind at large, the cares, the sins, the trials of the outer world—from all these the writer has withdrawn himself. The purification, the elevation of the individual soul in his *one* object.

But let not our last word on this marvellous study of the soul be only critical of its one defect. Let us recognize thankfully what we *do* find in it. It cannot be taken as a guide to the Christian life as a whole. It is too indifferent to human interests, to

the mighty thoughts and aims that shake mankind. Its ideal was avoidance of temptation, a shunning of vice rather than active work, negative rather than positive.

But still it sets forth with rare beauty the graces of humility, simplicity and purity of heart. It shows that they are the road to a higher joy, a deeper peace than anything the world can give. And though it does not comprise *all* we should understand by an imitation of Christ, and omits active service for the good of our fellows, still, can we dispense with the lesson which breathes through its pages? Do they not furnish a corrective to our over-anxious, bustling age, which is apt at times in its fondness for organization, to lose sight of the spiritual issues of life, and the end and object of all religion, which is Christ Himself, and union with Him.

Here are a very few out of its golden words—

1. "Be at peace, first, in yourself and then you will be able to bring others into peace."

"There are some who neither have peace in themselves, nor leave others in peace; these are a burden to others, and a greater burden still to themselves."

"And others again there are who are in peace and endeavour to bring others into the same condition."

"And yet all our peace in this life is to consist in humbly *bearing*—not in escaping, the things we do not like."

2. "Strive manfully. Habit is overcome by counter-habit."

3. "He who estimates all things according to their true value, and not according to their name or reputation, is indeed a wise man."

4. "You must one day be severed from all, whether you will or not."

"Keep near to Jesus both in life and in death, and

commit yourself to *His* faithful care—*who*, when all others fail, is able alone to help you.”

There is a little book of the fourteenth century, called *Theologia Germanica*, or German Theology. The name of its author is not known, but it is an admirable and safe guide to holy living. It is more than this, for it has a philosophical system, but I do not dwell on this.

It was discovered by Luther, who first brought it into notice by an edition of it which he published in 1516. It was probably written somewhere about 1350, since it refers to Tauler as already well known. Luther says of it, “Next to the Bible and St. Augustine, no book hath ever come into my hands, whence I have learnt, or would wish to learn, more of what God and Christ, and man and all things are.”

No fewer than seventeen editions of the work appeared during the lifetime of Luther. And up to the present day, it has continued to be a favourite handbook of devotion in Germany.

It is evident that the author belonged to a class of men who sprang up in Southern Germany at the beginning of the fourteenth century, who were distinguished for their earnest piety and their practical belief in the presence of the Spirit of God with all Christians, laity as well as clergy.

Its principles we may state thus—

Sin is selfishness.

Godliness is unselfishness.

A godly life is the steadfast working out of inward freeness from self.

To become thus Godlike is the bringing back of man's first nature.

This little book, then, is one of those influences which passed on the inextinguishable torch of true religion through the two centuries before the appearance of Luther. It appeals directly to God, to a far higher tribunal than that of any Papal Court.

Here are a few passages—

“Many say they have no peace nor rest, but so many crosses and trials, afflictions and sorrows, that they know not how they shall ever get through them. Now he who in truth will perceive and take note, perceiveth clearly, that true peace and rest lie not in outward things ; for if it were so, the Evil Spirit also would have peace, when things go according to his will.

“Moreover, there liveth no man on earth who may always have rest and peace without trouble and crosses, with whom things always go according to his will ; there is always something to be suffered here, turn which way you will. And as soon as you are quit of one assault, perhaps two come in its place. Wherefore yield thyself willingly to them, and seek only that true peace of the heart, which none can take away from thee, that thou mayest overcome all assaults.” He does *not* counsel abject submission to the difficulties of life, for he admits in one place that “we may, indeed, without sin prevent affliction or avoid it, or flee from it.” But entire satisfaction is only to be found in God.

“In truth, no thing is contrary to God ; no creature nor creature’s work, nor anything that we can name or think of is contrary to God or displeasing to Him, but only disobedience and the disobedient man. In short, all that is, is well-pleasing and good in God’s eyes, saving only disobedient man. But he is so displeasing and hateful to God, and grieveth Him so sore, that if it were possible for human nature to die a hundred deaths, God would willingly suffer them all for one disobedient man, that He might slay disobedience in him, and that obedience might be born again.

“And this contradiction to God’s will is what we call, and is, disobedience. And therefore Adam, the I, the Self, the Self-will, Sin, or the Old Man, the turning aside or departing from God, do all mean one and the same thing.

“What is Paradise? All things that are; for all are goodly and pleasant, and therefore may fitly be called a Paradise. It is said also, that Paradise is an outer court of Heaven. Even so this world is verily an outer court of the Eternal, or of Eternity, and specially whatever in time, or any temporal things or creatures, manifesteth or remindeth us of God or Eternity.”

And this is the author's last prayer—

“That we may thus deny ourselves, and forsake and renounce all things for God's sake, and give up our own wills, and die unto ourselves, and live unto God alone, and to His will—may *He* help us, who gave up His will to His Heavenly Father—Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be blessing for ever and ever.”

SECTION IV

WICLIF¹

JOHN WICLIF has been justly called the Morning Star of the Reformation. For (1) he called on the State to reform a corrupt Church, (2) he denounced the monks, (3) he pleaded for clerical marriages, (4) he placed spiritual religion above ceremonies. From such men's lives, if we are asked what religious lesson is gathered, it is enough to say that “it does good only to look at them.” Different from us in many accidental ways, and distant in time, still they rose above the mere current opinions of men of their time, they lived in the practice of a nearer presence of God, and thus the contemplation of them must do us good.

Wiclif may be called a martyr in will though not

¹ Abridged from the first of Jowett's *Biographical Sermons*. (Murray, 1899.)

in act. He desired a martyr's death, because it was the death of Christ, but that infamous Act, the Statute of Heretics, was not passed till seventeen years after his death, when the first to suffer was William Sawtre, and, some years later, Sir John Oldcastle. But though Wiclif did not die by the hand of the executioner, he was the first we hear of who was arraigned for heresy in England. This happened to him three times in 1377. On the first occasion he was saved by John of Gaunt, on the second by the mob of London.

Wiclif was born in Yorkshire about the year 1320. The first real notice we have of him is as Master of Balliol College, in 1361. He was known as the greatest logician of his day, and lectured at Oxford on the Scriptures till 1374, when he received the living of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, and there he remained till his death in 1384.

His writings are not read now, being chiefly controversial and written in antiquated English. But his great gift of an English translation of the Bible must ever endear his name to Englishmen.

"There was much misery and confusion in the age in which Wiclif lived.' It was the age of the 'black death,' in which half the people of England perished. It was the age of the peasant revolt, in which for the first time the labourer rose against the gentleman. To use a modern phrase, it was in the air, that is, in the minds of men, that some better state of the world was possible than that existing among themselves. And the miserable peasants too, in their own ignorant way, yet with a kind of sense, were crying to Heaven for deliverance. It was the age of the Papal schism, in which one half of the world was ready to make a crusade against the other half.

"Wiclif above all things was an Englishman, and he entered heart and soul into the struggle of the English nation and clergy against the encroachments of Rome. But there was another struggle into which he was soon forced to enter, nearer home, against the vices

and corruption of the English clergy themselves. In this struggle for a time he received the support of John of Gaunt, yet he was also popular with the citizens of London, the enemies of the Duke.

"The struggle in which he was engaged led Wiclif to examine deeply the origin of civil and ecclesiastical society. In the most famous of his works, *On the Kingdom of God*, he frames a sort of ideal of the Christian world. All authority is from God; all property is the gift of God.

"In his more special Christian teaching, Wiclif dwells on the nature and character of Christ.

"He is the Prior, Abbot, Pope, the Saint of all saints, the true Man, the only Mediator between God and man. As Christ is to other men, so the word of Christ, that is the gospel, is to other books. Wiclif enlarges on the humility, the gentleness, the poverty of Christ. His conception of the Christian life might be summed up in the words, 'the imitation of Christ.'

"In the last seven years of his life, he was led further and further into antagonism with the Roman Church. In the short time that remained, he seems to have given up one by one the distinctive tenets of the Church of Rome, and in modern phraseology to have become a Protestant. He now affirmed that the Pope was antichrist, that both Popes, Urban the Frenchman at Avignon, of whom he had once hoped better things, and Clement the Italian at Rome, were alike antichrists, and he denounces the begging friars as the slavish instruments of one or other of them."

We may sum up his opinions briefly as follows :—

(1) Christ is the true Head of the Church, and not the Pope.

(2) All the special Romish doctrines, *e.g.* masses for the dead, pilgrimages and indulgences, are a fraud, invented by the priests.

(3) Holy Scripture is the rule of life, and should be in English.

(4) In the Eucharist, we do spiritually receive our

Saviour, but the bread remains bread, and the wine remains wine.

Purgatory is the only point on which he speaks with some hesitation.

But a little more must be said on two important works of his later life:—

Firstly, his translation of the Bible.

“The first of these great works was completed in 1382, two years before his death; the New Testament having been translated by himself from the Latin Vulgate (for Wiclif knew no Greek), and the Old Testament by John Purvey, one of his followers. Like Luther, Wiclif opposed the written word of God to the traditions of the faith. And we may easily imagine the joy with which the common people received the purer idea of the gospel; and how they would point to the words of St. Paul, or of the old prophets, or of Christ Himself, against the abuses of the age.”

Wiclif's Bible was seized and burnt wherever a bishop's hand could be laid upon it, but how many copies must there have been, for a hundred manuscripts of it survive to-day!

Secondly, there was his Order of “poor priests.”

“The institution of itinerant preachers had a parallel in the begging friars of Wiclif's time, and may also be compared with John Wesley's lay helpers and preachers. They were poor men, not necessarily clergymen, who went about without shoes, and clad in a russet serge to preach the gospel to the poor. Doubtless, he sometimes thought of Christ sending out the seventy, two and two, who returned to Him with joy.”

They were to imitate the Apostles also in their ignorance of worldly learning, but here he forgot how it was St. Paul, the one learned Apostle, who really spread the Christian faith beyond Palestine.

Their teaching spread far and wide over the land. It was not true that they opposed the parochial

clergy or the bishops ; in the diocese of Lincoln they were at first employed under the sanction of the bishop.

Wiclif was persecuted. He was supported indeed first by the party of the nobles, and afterwards by the people. His persecutors were—alas that it should have been so!—the clergy and the Archbishops, Courtenay and Chicheley.

Even thirty years after his death the Council of Constance solemnly condemned his teaching and cursed his memory, and still worse, some years later that insane act was committed of disinterring his ashes and scattering them in the river Swift. But “this brook conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the ocean : and thus the ashes of Wiclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over.”

¹ Fuller.

PART V

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

SECTION I

TYNDAL

WE have followed the thread of Christian life, and traced its continuity through the Dark and part of the Middle Ages. We have come to the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. And at this point it is good to mark an important change. We must distinguish between those earlier partial, ephemeral and insufficient reforms, like that undertaken by Wiclif, who was destructive rather than reconstructive, laying a foundation, but not building on it, and the truer Reformation that follows. Armed with literature, and based on deeper knowledge, it was this that was to make a permanent conquest.

The history of our English Bible¹ is a long history. There were breaks and pauses in the history both before and after the fourteenth century, but it is at this period that the history of the English Bible properly begins.

The fourteenth century was marked by two chief features, (1) the corruption of the higher clergy ; (2) the growth of independence in the masses of the people. Both of these facts bore upon the history of our Bible. Both these things favoured an appeal

¹ An abridgment of Westcott's *History of the English Bible*.

from custom and tradition to the written, the unchanging Word.

Two names stand out in this connection in the period before us: they are *Wiclif* and *Tyndal*. Wiclif belongs entirely to the fourteenth century, Tyndal to the last twenty-three years of the fifteenth and the first thirty-six years of the sixteenth.

Wiclif began his labours on the Bible by a translation of the Revelation. This was followed by a translation of the Gospels, with a commentary, and at a later time by versions of the remaining books of the New Testament, with a fresh rendering of the Apocalypse, so that a complete English New Testament was finished about 1380. To this a version of the Old Testament was soon added, which appears to have been undertaken by a friend of Wiclif's, Nicholas de Hereford. Wiclif thus, before he died in 1384, had the joy of seeing his hope fulfilled, and the Scriptures circulated in various forms among his countrymen.

Like the earlier Saxon translations, Wiclif's translations were made from the Latin Vulgate, and from the text commonly current in the fourteenth century, which was far from correct. It was also so exactly literal that in many places the meaning was obscure. The followers of Wiclif were not blind to these defects, and in 1388, within a few years after his death, a complete revision of the Bible was undertaken by John Purvey.

Considering the age in which the translators lived we see that it must have been a vast work. There were difficulties in the translation itself, there were difficulties also in its circulation. There was opposition and persecution. Arundel, who became Archbishop of Canterbury twelve years after Wiclif died, in a convocation held at Oxford in 1408 decreed that "no man hereafter by his own authority translate any text of the Scripture into English or any other tongue, by way of a book, pamphlet, or treatise; and that no man read any such book, pamphlet, or

treatise, now lately composed in the time of John Wiclif, or since, or hereafter to be set forth in part or in whole, publicly or privately, upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said translation be approved by the ordinary of the place."

At the beginning of the fifteenth century a new horror appeared in English life. The series of cruel Acts of Parliament against heretics began. In 1401 came the Act for burning heretics; in 1415, the second year of Henry V, came the Lollard Act. The Lollards as a party were destroyed, but the English Bible survived their destruction. The book was transcribed for private use. The fact that 174 manuscripts of it have been examined shows that it could not be suppressed. John of Gaunt did what he could to circulate it, and Richard II, with his wife, Anne of Bohemia, constantly studied the four Gospels in English. It is interesting also to know that nearly half of the copies we have are of such a size that they might be the constant companions of their owners. And so we can realize Foxe's words "that in 1520 . . . great multitudes . . . tasted and followed the sweetness of God's holy Word. Some gave five marks (about £40 in our money), some more, some less for a book; some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul in English."

I pass on to Tyndal. The great invention of the printing press had taken place between him and Wiclif. A mighty change, too, had passed over Western Europe. Greece (as has been strikingly said) had risen from the grave with the New Testament in her hand. This was under the influence of Erasmus.

For fifteen years the history of the English Bible is almost the same as the history of Tyndal. He was born in Gloucestershire, a hundred years after Wiclif's death about 1484. He studied the Scriptures both at Oxford and Cambridge, and in early life declared that "if God spared him life, ere many years

he would cause a boy who drove the plough to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope did."

But opposition and trouble fell on him. He left his native country for ever. Exile, poverty, bitter absence from friends, hunger and thirst and cold, and at last martyrdom were in store for him. He went to Hamburgh, to Cologne, to Worms, labouring on in silence, and carrying with him his printed sheets, when they were in danger of being seized by his enemies, who were many and powerful. "*Persecuted from city to city.*" At the last-named city 6,000 copies were printed. The book, passing down the Rhine into Holland, made its way into England, smuggled in bales of Dutch ware and Flanders cloth. It was eagerly sought after; some said they would buy it if they had to give 100,000 pieces of money for it. Sir Thomas More fiercely attacked the translation, and by Wolsey's advice King Henry VIII at once condemned it to be burnt, and this was done at Antwerp, at London and at Oxford. And why? Because, forsooth, ecclesiastical terms such as Church, priest, charity, grace, confess, penance, were disregarded, and in their place were put congregation, elder, love, favour, knowledge, repentance. That such a storm of malice should be thus stirred up, that a good man's labours for spreading truth should be assailed by venomous tongues, and at last even his life taken, is scarcely credible. Oh, Religion, what crimes have been committed in thy name! And after all, a few years later Coverdale's Bible (the Bible which was ordered to be set up in every church) *was* permitted to be circulated by Henry, and the basis of that Bible was Tyndal's version!

Tyndal said, "They would have burnt Christ Himself also, if they had had Him." I will not attempt to follow in detail either the different revisions made by Tyndal, or the circumstances of his cruel betrayal and martyrdom. Enough to say that he was seized by the contrivance, it is supposed, of the English

Government, and kept in confinement at Villefort, near Brussels, for a year and a half. His keeper and his keeper's daughter and others of his keeper's household were won over by him to belief, which reminds one of St. Paul's jailer at Philippi. Then he was brought to trial and condemned as guilty of heresy. While in prison he revised the New Testament once more.

For thirteen years he had worked as an exile by foreign instruments, and he could rejoice at the last that his labour found its proper home in his own land.

His heroic character, his single-minded honesty, his forgetfulness of self in the prospect of finishing his great Work—"I never altered one syllable of God's Word," he says, "against my conscience"—all this should never be forgotten.

And what was his last touching prayer, when he was fastened to the stake, witnessing especially to his loyalty and his faith? It was, "Lord! open the eyes of the King of England!"

October 6, 1536.

SECTION II

ERASMUS AND LUTHER¹

A MOMENTOUS change was passing over Western Europe in the sixteenth century.

Erasmus, a great scholar, a great instrument in the Reformation, but a man by no means perfect, and marred with much weakness of character, was born at Rotterdam in 1467.

His name was really Gerrard, but it was a pedantic fashion of the time to adopt classical forms such as this.

¹ Abridged from an article written by me for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1895, on Froude's *Life and Letters of Erasmus*.

We may pass briefly over the boyhood, the youth, and early manhood of Erasmus. "It was early recognized that he was no common lad. After his father's death he was ill-treated by his three guardians, who defrauded him of his patrimony. Every argument and artifice was used to induce him and his brother to enter a monastery. The brother yielded, but not so Erasmus. He agreed, however, for a few months to enter an Augustinian monastery, and submitted to become a novice. For a time he was allowed to comfort himself in the library, but it was found necessary to teach him the lesson of holy obedience, and the books were taken away."

From the prospect of this lifelong slavery he was rescued by the Prior. He procured him an appointment as secretary to the Bishop of Cambray, who sent him to Paris, to continue his studies there. He had already been ordained priest, but he was permitted to modify his monastic dress, and his life seems to have been more secular than ecclesiastical. At Paris he taught himself the main elements of Greek, and eked out the small allowance made him by the Bishop by taking pupils; among these was the son of Lord Mountjoy, on whose invitation Erasmus came to England at the end of the year 1497.

From this point the life of Erasmus falls into three divisions. I. There are the seventeen years from 1497 to 1514, when he finally left England after his fourth visit. II. There is the period from 1514 to 1529, during which he lived sometimes in the Netherlands, sometimes at Basle. III. There is the last portion of his life, marked by his removal from Basle to Freyburg on the ascendancy of the Reformed party, and his return to Basle the year before his death.

The first of these periods must have comprised the happiest days in his life. Besides being introduced at once to the most cultivated and intellectual society of the time, he gained experience of English life in country houses. Soon after his arrival in London he

was invited to Oxford. He had come to Oxford not to teach, but to learn. "I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning, and as soon as I get any money I shall buy Greek books—and then I shall buy some clothes." So he had written in Paris.

He resided at Oxford for about two years, and while there he enjoyed sweet converse "with that small, transfigured band" to which he himself contributed so much besides learning, by his gaiety, his ease, and his playful irony. In his studies, his rule was "to keep firmly to the Bible and the Apostles' Creed, and let divines, if they like, dispute about the rest."

Two other lifelong friends were *Sir Thomas More*, then a lad of twenty, to whom he was introduced by Mountjoy, and *William Warham*, who three years after Erasmus's arrival in England was made Primate, and afterwards Chancellor. Warham was his most munificent benefactor.

Of the rest of Erasmus's sojourn in England, the chief interest centres round his two residences at Cambridge, where he lodged at Queens' College, and where "Erasmus's Walk" is still shown.

In 1509 he became Professor of Greek at Cambridge. He was deeply engaged on Jerome, and on his celebrated edition of the New Testament in the original Greek, with a new and free Latin translation of his own, and remarkable notes attached to special passages and paraphrases, a translation of which was ordered to be placed in all our churches. The influence of this work we can hardly over-estimate; and his words, though so often quoted, may bear to be quoted once more: "I long for the day when the husbandman shall sing portions of the Gospels and Epistles of St. Paul to himself as he follows the plough, when the weaver shall hum them to the tune of his shuttle, when the traveller shall while away with their stories the weariness of his journey."

The occasion of the last visit to England was a

pressing invitation to him to return, in an extremely interesting letter from Henry VIII. Erasmus had been introduced to him some years before by More. Henry proposes that he should make his settled home in England. Erasmus alone can stop the tide of heresy and impiety. He is assured of a hearty welcome, and shall name his own terms. Considering the flattering language of this letter, we are somewhat surprised at Erasmus resolving to leave the country so soon. It was not that he disliked England—far from it—but “he had higher ambitions, and his thoughts turned to his friends the Cardinals at Rome.” Thus it came about that he finally sailed from Dover on July 8, 1514.

During these years were composed some of his most important works, e. g. *The Praise of Folly*. This most witty satire on all sorts and conditions of men was the outcome of all he had seen and brooded over on his visit to Rome, and at roadside inns on his journey thither, for he was never idle, even in his journeys on horseback he would compose.

But the succeeding fifteen years, 1514–1529, are a period of storm and stress, of embarrassment and conflict. Erasmus frequently changed his residence. The course of European history leads through a tangled and thorny path, to issue in more than a century of bloodshed. To a man of peace, to a man of books like Erasmus, it was very trying.

The Pope, the great religious orders—mortally opposed to the “New Learning”—the Kings of France and England, Luther, Young Germany goaded on by Ulrich von Hutten and his friends, the anonymous joint authors of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, the mighty and daily increasing power of the printing press, sending forth faster and faster copies of the New Testament—here were sufficient materials for strife. The Reformation was inevitable, but the method of its evolution was deplorable. It is hard for us to realize the dethronement of the Papacy

from its hold upon men's minds. Neither the fighting Pope, Julius II, nor Leo X, the worldly man of culture, could shake the allegiance of Erasmus. "You may assure yourself that Erasmus has been, and always will be, a faithful servant of the Roman See. Death will not part me from the Roman Church till the Church departs from Christ." The world was changing, and the Church party would not understand it.

Erasmus could read the signs of the times. But after the storm aroused by Tetzel and his sale of indulgences, he saw how Rome had mismanaged the whole business. Had the Pope interfered at that critical moment, and condemned the grossness of Tetzel and his doings, Luther, much as he disliked the teaching and practice of the Church in general, would have said no more. As it was, the blame of what happened was thrown upon Erasmus, and not altogether without justice. For the saying was true, that "he laid the egg, and Luther hatched it." The position he occupied was unique. Both parties tried by threats or flattery to win him over.

He was eagerly courted and sought after for his opinion, his books were in every house—but he was the best-hated man in Europe. "He was railed at in lecture-rooms, insulted in the pulpits, cursed and libelled in the press." At last he left Louvain, and in 1522 he settled at Basle.

The secret of Luther's concealment in the Castle of Wartburg, after he was spirited away by the Elector of Saxony on his way home to Wittenberg, was kept so well that Erasmus believed for some time that he was dead. "Luther is done with—I trust well done with; and for my own part, I return to my studies," he wrote in the autumn of 1521. Thus he was encouraged in the idea, that extreme measures might be avoided. Change he knew must come. But he hoped that it would come through a gentle, orderly reform conducted *inside* the Church. But, when it was known that Luther was alive, pressure

was brought to induce Erasmus to answer him with argument. He began to feel that he must comply. "I do not see what business it is of mine," he writes, "but I will think of it."

Thus it came about that at last he screwed up his courage, took up his pen, and composed his treatise on Free Will. By choosing this subject he avoided such questions as purgatory, indulgences, worship of saints, etc. He meant thus to strike at the very heart of the Lutheran doctrinal system, according to which man could not of his own free will please God—a system which he saw would lead to difficulties, and lay fresh burdens on the human conscience.

"The sum of religion," he once said, "is peace, which can only be when definitions are as few as possible, and opinion is left free on many subjects." But peace was not granted to Erasmus for any length of time.

He felt if he stayed at Basle that he would seem to approve what was done, and he would also be at the mercy of the rabble. He was careful to provide himself with a safe-conduct from the Archduke Ferdinand. He tried unsuccessfully to start from a private landing-place, but the Senate would not allow this. Basle was free for every one to come and go. As we look down on the rushing Rhine from the bridge we can imagine we see the pale features, the figure worn by study, as he embarks with a few friends, and looks anxiously round in fear of any hindrance at the last moment.

He was now sixty-two years old (1529), broken down by the gout and stone, "shot at from all sides," harassed beyond measure with the news brought to his sick-bed of the turn things were taking at the Diet of Augsburg. He had also to hear of the loss of his best friends—the death of Warham, and the execution of Fisher and More. But the evening of his days was cheered by several gleams of light. His opinion was as eagerly sought as ever. Once more

he returned to Basle in 1535, meaning only to stay till his shattered health was set up by its climate, which suited him. He had to be carried in a litter, and died there in the following summer.

Luther's career is so well known to most people that we need not describe it at length—his disappointment and disillusionment at Rome—his finding the copy of the Vulgate at Erfurt—how he proclaimed his theses against the indulgences—how he burnt the Pope's Bull—how he went to Worms, though warned that the fate of Huss would await him—how he translated the Bible for his countrymen.

The contrast between Erasmus and Luther is the eternal contrast between the moderate reformer and the enthusiast. The two minds and tempers were hopelessly uncongenial. The one was ardent and uncompromising, the other believed in moderation and toleration. The difference is tersely expressed in one of his letters: "It seems to me that I have taught almost everything that Luther has taught, only not so truculently." The greatest service Erasmus could render to his age was, he felt, to devote himself to the revival of good literature, including, first and foremost, the Scriptures.

After all has been said of Erasmus that can be said to his discredit, on his cautiousness, his timidity, his want of religious fervour, it remains true that he never shrank from putting clearly before his age the picture of Christ as a living Person, and Christianity as it should be, in fearless contrast with the Christianity of the Vatican. "*Men talk of heresy and orthodoxy, but none speak of Christ.*" He was not a hero; he was not a saint. He was very far from having the spirit of a martyr, as he himself confessed. But he was a mighty instrument in working out the evolution of the New Learning and the New Age. He stood up for light and truth against ignorance and lies, for moderation and concession against violence and persecution, for peace against war, for fair-play

against intolerance. Had his counsel been listened to, had the Papacy vigorously carried out the reforms he saw were most needed, and set its house in order betimes, Christendom might have been spared many a crime perpetrated in the name of religion—the horrors of the Anabaptists at Münster, and the spectacle of Zwingli dying, battle-axe in hand, on the field of Cappel.

Among his best utterances we may recall these—

“I am firmly resolved to die studying the Scriptures: it is my joy and peace.”

“The sum of all Christian philosophy is this, to place all our hope in God, who through grace, without our merits, gives us everything by Jesus Christ—to know that we are ransomed by Him.”

“Give light and the darkness will disappear of itself.”

But when he saw men’s passion excited, and evil everywhere mingling itself with any little good, Erasmus became terrified. He was irresolute. “It is dangerous to speak,” he said, “and it is dangerous to be silent.” He could not abandon himself, and so he lost himself with all parties.

When he saw the tempest he had himself raised he was alarmed. From a boy he had been timid. The very name of death made him tremble. But when his time came he received it with tranquillity.

Let us not be too hard on him, but remember the good work that he accomplished as a great scholar, as a faithful translator of the New Testament, as a powerful instrument in liberating the mind of Christendom, as the parent of biblical criticism and of a more rational interpretation than the world had yet seen.

SECTION III

CRANMER¹

CRANMER was born of respectable parentage at Aslacton in Nottinghamshire, July 2, 1489, being six years younger than Luther, and nine years younger than Sir Thomas More. He went up to Jesus College, Cambridge, in 1503, and was elected Fellow. Marrying early he forfeited his Fellowship, but on the death of his wife a year after, he was re-elected, and at this time began his serious course of study. From this time on, until Erasmus' translation of the New Testament was published in 1516 and later, our future reformer carried on a systematic examination of the Scriptures. His great industry and his personal attraction even his enemies have not denied. Among those who embraced the Lutheran doctrines at this time were Tyndal, Latimer, Ridley. Cranmer in 1525 began to pray in private for the abolition of the Papal power in England. He was a slow reader, and slow in forming opinions, cautious almost to timidity—a *conservative reformer*.

The year 1529, when he was forty, was a turning-point in his life. It was then that two youths named Cressy were under his care. Their father lived at Waltham, and thither he went with his pupils to take refuge from the plague that was afflicting Cambridge. And there took place what helped to alter the whole course of English history. Henry VIII had been hunting near Waltham, and rested there. Fox and Gardiner, afterwards bishops of Winchester and Hereford, who were in attendance on him, were quartered in Cressy's house, and naturally fell to discussing the question of the King's divorce, then in every one's mouth—for Catherine of Aragon,

¹ I have consulted throughout and used Professor Pollard's *Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation*. Putnam, 1904.

married to Henry in 1509, was the widow of his brother Arthur. The contract was made when the Prince was but twelve years old, and Pope Julius II, when first asked, doubted whether he could grant a dispensation for it to take place, but he did grant it, and so, when nearly twenty years after Henry asked Clement VII to pronounce his marriage null and void, he was asking one pope to repudiate the act of another. The lack of male heirs to the throne, the passion for Anne Boleyn, increased the alleged scruples of Henry, at first, perhaps, fictitious, but cherished till they were believed to be real—all these causes were working.

Clement, when appealed to by Henry, we must recollect, was a prisoner in the Castle of St. Angelo at Rome, being kept there by Charles V, who was nephew to Catherine. This was another complication, for was it likely that he would cause his own ruin by sanctioning the divorce of the Emperor's aunt?

When the question was mooted at Waltham, Cranmer at first declined giving any opinion upon it; but being pressed, he said that, were he king, he would spend no more time in fruitless negotiations with Rome, but would apply to the principal Universities, and to the learned men in Europe, proposing to them this plain question, *Can a man marry his brother's widow?* Gardiner and Fox were much struck with this hint, and mentioned it to the king. Cranmer was immediately sent for to Court, and the king was so much pleased with him, that he retained him in his service, and engaged him to write a book in favour of the divorce.

This episode was the most important one in Cranmer's life. For through it (1) he attracted the notice of Henry; to it he owed (2) his elevation to the See of Canterbury; (3) the part he played in the Reformation; and (4) finally his martyrdom.

I need not dwell on the fall of Wolsey, because of his wish to invoke the supremacy of the Pope, who, if he acted at all, must have acted in poor

Catherine's defence. And I need not go into detail on the events of the next four years—Cranmer's visits to foreign Universities to collect their votes, his going as an ambassador to Charles, his return, and, on the death of Warham, his becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. This was in 1533; he at once proceeded to try the validity of the king's marriage with Catherine. A court was assembled at Dunstable, and after a fortnight spent in hearing arguments, and reading opinions, sentence of divorce was pronounced, declaring the king's marriage with Catherine of Aragon null and void from the beginning, and her daughter Mary illegitimate. His marriage with Anne Boleyn was declared valid, and she was three days afterwards crowned by Cranmer, and received as queen.

Cranmer's protest on his Consecration must not be passed by. It bears directly on any estimate of his character. Four days before he declared that he, in taking the oath of obedience to the Pope, "did not intend to bind himself to do anything contrary to the King and Commonwealth of England, or to restrain his liberty in any reformation of the English Church that he might judge to be required. . . ." It is important to mark this. He foresaw, no doubt, that England would throw off her allegiance to Rome. Some have seen no fault in his thus taking the oath, considering it a mere form: but must it not be called disingenuous? This first deviation from integrity drew after it many others. It began that course of temporizing and compliance to which he was reduced for the rest of Henry's reign.

Just twenty years later Cranmer joined in signing the will of Edward VI, excluding the Princess Mary, daughter of the unfortunate Catherine, from succession.

Those twenty years are crowded with momentous events, *e.g.* the enormous increase of royal power, the suppression of the monasteries, the execution of Thomas Cromwell, Sir Thomas More, and Bishop

Fisher. The policy of Henry has been described as that of putting to death as heretics those who were Lutherans, and as traitors those who owned the authority of the Pope.

During this period Cranmer was in constant peril. He thought the supremacy of the King a real good, he saw in it the only means of reform. Not a change of doctrine, but a change of conduct was the most pressing need, and with this a revival of scriptural knowledge. He was often frustrated in his efforts for a revised Bible, on which he had set his heart. At last, in 1540, was issued what was called Cranmer's Bible, from his writing a preface of it. And a copy of it was ordered to be set up in every church. Though he saw the evils of the religious houses, he did not sympathize with the methods of their destruction.

His natural mildness made him averse to persecution. It is now believed that he had nothing to do with the burning of three Anabaptists on St. Andrew's Day, 1538. He severely felt the passing of the Six Articles, brought about by the profane attacks on the Sacrament of the Mass, and through his influence the penalties attached to it were not put into execution. The blame of Henry's second divorce rests partly with him, but still more with others. After the death of Cromwell, whom he vainly tried to save, many tried to compass Cranmer's downfall.

I need but allude to the attempt to ruin him, when he was all but committed to the Tower, and only saved by producing the King's ring—the famous scene in Shakespeare. After that no man durst move against him during Henry's life.

No account of Cranmer can forget what the English Book of Common Prayer owes to him. First there is the Litany, in its present form—not in all its parts original—for in this, as in all that he did, Cranmer wished not to uproot the old, but to repair and to improve; much old material was therefore wrought into his new and finer Litany. How well it has stood

the test of time! Have not many of its phrases become household words? If a few expressions seem to us out of date, we must recollect that they bear the colour of the times, *e.g.* "from sedition, privy conspiracy, heresy, from our enemies and persecutors." It was first used at St. Paul's, October 18, 1545. Later came the Prayer Book of 1549, prepared by a Commission, with the Archbishop at its head, and its Revision, the second Prayer Book of 1552, which was a compromise between the old and new services.

We come to the last part of Cranmer's troubled life. In 1552 Henry had been dead five years: Henry, who, when asked as he was dying whether a cleric should be sent for, replied, *Cranmer if any*, for he had been his best friend in life; Henry, who when speechless, and urged by Cranmer to call upon Christ's mercy and give some token of trust in the Lord, stretched out his hand to grasp that of the Archbishop,—it was all he could do; Henry, who though faithless to many, was true to Cranmer to the last. And now, even before the brief reign of the boy king Edward was over, the Archbishop's troubles began.

The stress of the times was too much for the weakness of will and infirmity of purpose in Cranmer. No protest escaped his lips when the Duke of Somerset and his party were plundering the Church wholesale. And when he set his name to the will that excluded Mary from the succession in 1553, he was signing his own death warrant. It was not likely, apart from religious opinions, that one of her narrow and obstinate nature would forgive that. We need not follow his decline and fall, when the pendulum swung back again, and he had to face the decisive dilemma of his life—whether to obey his conscience, which rebelled against Rome, or to submit to the laws of the State, which he had always upheld, but which now were subject to Rome.

The pathos of his humiliation and his repentance, the moral cowardice of his six recantations, the

exquisite cruelties and indignities attending his degradation at Oxford,—all this we know. Human frailty there was indeed, but his triumph before the end was signal. He manfully atoned for his lapse. He “professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

“Now”—thus ended his address to the hushed congregation before him in St. Mary’s Church, Oxford —“now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth; which here I now renounce and refuse as things written by my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death to save my life, if it might be. And, forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand therefore shall be the first punished; for if I come to the fire, it shall be the first burnt.”

“This was the hand that wrote it,” he again exclaimed at the stake, “therefore it shall suffer first punishment;” and holding it steadily in the flame, “he never stirred nor cried” till life was gone.

“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” So it had been with St. Peter, so it was with the Archbishop.

His character is a very mixed one. As to the position he holds in the Reformation, we must admit that his ideal was a noble one. His ideal was to adopt the New Learning, but to remain in communion with the Catholic Church, purified of Papal corruptions, and this purified Catholic Church was by means of a reformed general council to bring the whole of Christendom into a new scriptural unity. Cranmer sincerely thought that the royal supremacy was a good thing. He thought it, indeed, the only way to bring about a reform. He believed that the Church gained more than it lost by connection with the State. It was to the test of Scripture that he brought the

problems of the time. To the study of the Scriptures from his early days at Cambridge he was ever devoted. What were his views on the Eucharist? "As for the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament," he wrote, "I grant that He is really present, that is to say in deed, and yet but spiritually. The bread and wine are no vain or bare tokens. I do as plainly speak as I can, that Christ's body and blood be given to us in deed, yet not corporally or carnally, but spiritually and effectually."—Can we object to that? The Sacrament remained with him a miracle, but it is a miracle wrought by God, and not by priests. It was this that struck at the whole mediæval Church system. But while opposing abuses, Cranmer had a profound respect for the decisions of antiquity. Cranmer was not indeed a great statesman. He was far better suited to the quiet life of the University, but he was called to fill a position to which he was not equal, and he fell upon evil days. There was much to attract in his character. If it had struck no chords in English hearts, his work in the Prayer Book would not have survived and retained our affection. He was unworldly, he was not greedy of wealth, he had no political ambition such as some other great Churchmen had. He alone interceded for Fisher and More, and many others. He refused to fly before danger at Mary's accession, and he endured imprisonment for two and a half years. By nature he was shrinking and sensitive, but he was heroic in his end. We may grant that in many passages of his life he is neither to be imitated nor admired, but he is much to be pitied; and for his influence on a momentous period of Church history he is much to be remembered and studied.

SECTION IV

HOOKER, 1553-1600—L. ANDREWES, 1555-1626

SOME brief notice is due to two English Churchmen, each of whom in their own way did much to weaken the power of Puritanism.

The first of these is *Richard Hooker*, author of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, a man of evangelical piety and of vast learning, though sprung from the humblest origin, a member of both Universities, Cambridge and Oxford. He was for a long time buried in the obscurity of a country parsonage; but his eloquence and erudition obtained for him the post of Master of the Temple in London, where his colleague in the ministry, Walter Travers, propounded doctrines on Church government, which, being like those of the Calvinistic confession, were very different from Hooker's opinions. The mildness and modesty of Hooker's character, rendering controversy and disputation insupportable to him, urged him to implore that he might be removed from his place, and restored to the more congenial duties of a country parish.

If any foreigner landing in England at the end of Elizabeth's reign, had asked where he should find the most learned divine, what would have been the answer? Not in Oxford, not in Cambridge, not in London. He must have turned away to a quiet little parish in Kent, four miles from Canterbury, Bishopsbourne, and in the minister of that retired parish he would have found what he sought. In the parish church is a bust of Hooker.

It was here that he executed that great work which has placed him among the most eminent of the Anglican divines, and among the best prose-writers of his age. The title of this work is *A Treatise on the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, and its object is to

investigate and define the fundamental principles upon which is founded the right of the Church to the obedience of its members, and the duty of the members to pay obedience to the Church. But, though the principal object of the book is to establish the relative rights and duties of the Anglican Church in particular, and to defend its organization against the attacks of the Roman Catholics on the one hand, and the Calvinists on the other, Hooker has dug deep down into the eternal granite on which are founded all law, all obedience, and all right, political as well as religious. The *Ecclesiastical Polity* is a monument of close and cogent logic, supported by immense and varied erudition, and written in a style free from pedantry—clear, vigorous and unaffected.

His rank is among the highest of English prose writers. He had to argue against those who objected to bishops. But he does so in no narrow spirit. The authority of Scripture is not a broad enough foundation for him. Man's path is enlightened from many sources, not from one alone; he lives in a world ruled by law, and the law of the universe is the reason of God. The Scriptures complete the natural law; they cannot be put in its place. A divine order exists, and human reason determines its law. Human reason is the true basis of authority, because it approaches nearest to the reason of God. And thus his book appealed to the broad sense and intelligence of Englishmen, rather than to the learned divines; and as its argument sank into the minds of thoughtful persons, it became impossible for them to cling to the rigid system of Calvin.

As a specimen of both its matter and its style, take the following passage with which he closes the First Part of his work:—

“Wherefore, that here we may briefly end : of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God ; her voice the harmony of the world ; all things in heaven and earth do her homage,

the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power ; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy."

The other Churchman alluded to above was a friend of George Herbert—I mean Lancelot Andrewes.

Andrewes was two years younger than Hooker, but he outlived him by more than a quarter of a century. He lived, *i. e.* under the last of the Tudors, and also under the first two of the Stuarts. He is thus a *link* between Hooker, Laud, J. Taylor, Ken and Wilson.

It is well for a moment to compare him with Hooker. Hooker claimed for the Church of England the rights of Christian and religious *reason* ; Andrewes claimed on its behalf the rights of Christian *history*.

Andrewes was always ready to give advice and spiritual counsel to any who sought it. For this purpose he used to walk up and down the aisle of St. Paul's.

Andrewes probably had a great influence in moulding the character of Herbert when he was a boy at Westminster School. One of Herbert's letters the Bishop treasured so much, that he kept it near his heart till the last day of his life.

He was always on the watch to seek out the promise of ability and worth in the poor and friendless, and to encourage learning in others by noble liberality. He selected poor scholars and helped them. He used his patronage most honourably and with a princely expenditure. The actual events of his life to record are few. We may sum them up by saying that after being Dean of Westminster he became Bishop of Chichester, then of Ely, then of Winchester, and it was said of him when he died that "God translated him to Heaven, just as he was about to be translated to Canterbury."

He took part in the Hampton Court Conference in

1604, and his name was first on the list of divines appointed to make the authorized version of the Bible. He was also a courtier ; and in this respect different people have held different opinions about him.

By one writer he is described as a man of saintly character, a master in the spiritual life, walking among the flatterers who surrounded King James I like a being from another world.

Another tells us that he preached passive obedience to the worst tyranny, declaring James to have been inspired by God. According to this view his character began to deteriorate from the time when he was made a bishop. Unworthy compliance with the caprice or the passion of the Court was the snare of those times.

There seems no doubt that he consented to vote in a scandalous case as James summoned him to vote, and that he accompanied him in his visit to Scotland, which caused such misery to the poor people honoured by that royal progress. This is the one blot on his fame.

We must admit that he fell below his own standard. We see what that standard was in his priceless *Private Devotions*. No one questions their sincerity. The bitterness of his servility no one feels more keenly than their author. "O God," he prayed in secret every night, "*save me from making a god of the King.*" And yet this was the very thing he was doing ! Alas for our poor human nature !—a continual confession, a continual condemnation, a continual contrast to our every-day life ! Alas, is not that very much the state of many ! This struggle, this self-accusation, is very remarkable when we see it in such a holy, estimable character as that of Lancelot Andrewes, for he was really that ; but the desire to please the King was at times too much for him.

Of his learning there is no doubt. And we cannot forget how it was Andrewes who was a prime mover in bringing over to England the most learned

man in Europe of the day, *Isaac Casaubon*—on the invitation of James I. The Bishop and the Scholar soon became most intimate friends, and frequent visits were paid by the foreigner to the Bishop's Palace at Ely, when Andrewes was there. If there were two saints in England at that time, they were surely to be found under the roof of that Palace. They mutually delighted in each other's society. In learning and in piety they were congenial spirits. Casaubon's diary is one prolonged litany. And it was at the hands of Andrewes that Casaubon, when dying, received the Holy Communion, July 12, 1614.

Of Andrewes' preaching various opinions are held. His method was to hammer the same idea into his hearers again and again—to claim all that was ancient, all that was universal in Christianity. He was never tired of using the same word. He could not preach like Hooker, or Donne, or J. Taylor, and his sermons are not readable at the present day, however much some people praise their eloquence. But he could pray as no other man could pray. It is by his *Devotions* that he lives.

What a pity it is (some one has said) that anything of Andrewes has been preserved besides his *Private Devotions*. As their name shows, they were never meant to be published. The little book was found after his death. He wrote it for his own use, and when he had finished it, he gave it to his friend Archbishop Laud. There is nothing in the whole range of devotional literature to be set beside it. It is original, though made up so largely of biblical passages; peculiar in its composition, written mostly in Greek and afterwards translated. It reflects, as in a mirror, a lifetime of profound penitence, faith and love. He sees mysteries in the commonest things, and feels himself still living amid visible traces of a Divine dispensation. The beauty of natural objects is everywhere reflected in the book. Its sources were

two, Scripture and his own life. It is severe, sincere, and serious.

These prayers are well known and largely used. But I may quote a few passages from them :—

“Be favourable to all those good men, who bring forth the fruits of piety and charity, in any particular churches ; crown all their holy labours with success ; and the alms they contribute to Thy needy members, do Thou return into their bosoms, in rich and heavenly graces ; abundantly overpaying their earthly things, with heavenly : their corruptible things, with incorruptible : their temporal, with eternal.

“Shed Thy grace upon all those pious souls, who use the world as not abusing it, by a discreet and moderate enjoyment of the most lawful pleasures, under the constant direction and restraint of religion and godly fear.

“Bless our husbandmen with fruitful seasons, our fleets with favourable winds, our merchants with successful voyages, our tradesmen with a spirit of honesty and contentment, our artificers even to the poorest with grace to follow their respective labours diligently and patiently for fair and reasonable profit.

“For my own friends, my father's friends and the children of both our friends.” How comprehensive, is it not !

“For all who have at any time done me good, by their writings, or by their sermons ; by their discourse, or by their temper ; by their prayers, or by their examples ; by their advice, or by their reproofs ; by their rewards, or by their punishments ; nay, perhaps even by their causeless censures of me, or unjust proceedings against me.

“For all these, and for all other instances of any manner of good done to me, whether asked or unasked ; whether intended or not intended ; whether known or unknown ; whether remembered or forgotten ; whether with or against my own consent ; I do, and will, praise Thee ; O Lord, I do, and will,

bless Thee ; I do, and will, humbly adore Thee, and most heartily thank Thee, this day, and every day of my life."

In 1625 King James died. On his death-bed he sent for his favourite bishop, but Andrewes was himself too ill to visit him. On February 2 of the next year he was able to be present at the Coronation of Charles I, and that was one of the last public acts that Andrewes ever performed. On September 25, 1626, he died.

Milton, then a youth of seventeen, at Cambridge, lamented his loss in a beautiful Latin poem.

SECTION V

XAVIER ¹

WE have a typical instance of a missionary in the sixteenth century in Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies, as he has been called. Nothing scarcely was done as to the conversion of the heathen till the middle of the sixteenth century, the reason being that the different sections of the Western Church were so much occupied with their own conflicts, or with purifying their doctrine, and at least, in the case of the Church of Rome, on the Continent with carrying out a counter-reformation.

At last the time was ripe, and this great hero, the Spaniard Xavier, arose.

Born in sight of the Pyrenees, in 1506, of illustrious origin, destined for the law, he was sent to study at Paris. A missionary career seemed a most unlikely destiny for him, had he not there met Ignatius Loyola while he was light of heart and enjoying liberty, society and success.

¹ This section is an abridgment of the interesting *Life of Xavier* by M. H. McLean. (Kegan Paul, 1895.)

"Then, when life was bright and fortune smiled, this faithful friend turned upon Xavier with the solemn question: 'What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Xavier, ambitious and successful, turned a deaf ear to these words, and pursued his worldly course. Still from time to time he sought the friend to whom he owed so much, and for whom he had so profound an affection, and again and yet again this friend repeated: 'What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' With sweetness, with persistence, Loyola sought to win this youth, whose great gifts he wished to secure for the service of the Lord. He showed him the vanity of all earthly success, he preached to him the words which have resounded through the course of ages: 'What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'"

At last Xavier, touched by the patience and insistence of his master, consented to practise the spiritual exercises which he advised.

Boldly and cheerfully and unvexed by doubts, Francis devoted himself to a religious life in the way that seemed clear to him: persevering in his ordinary vocation until some harder task should be found for him, and exercising himself, after Loyola's example, in fasting and meditation, penitence and prayer.

He follows Ignatius with other disciples to Venice. In hospital and prison they began their labours of love. All were active, all were devoted, but in zeal and tenderness Xavier surpassed them all. To nurse those afflicted with hopeless and loathsome disease, and wait upon the mean and degraded of his race, could not have been a congenial task to a refined and educated man. Yet he did this day and night, sparing himself neither disgust nor humiliation to give one moment of comfort or religious consolation to these poor wretches so near death and, for the most part, so far from heaven. In fact, he served at the

Hospital of Incurables as if there were none but incurables in the universe. His strength lay in this singleness of aim.

We next have a glimpse of him at Rome. Xavier, "ghastly and emaciated by illness and by austerities, seemed to give his congregation warning of the solemn certainty of death, as much by his face as his words, while the fervour of his exhortations drew tears from all eyes, and bore witness daily to the power of the spirit over mortal weakness."

But we must come at once to the great project of his life,—to carry the religion of the Cross into the stronghold of Brahminism and Buddhism. Invited to Portugal by King John III, he exchanged his residence there for distant fields of missionary labour. The king unwillingly let him go, but with every mark of confidence.

"Never any man presumed less upon favour. The royal purveyor, charged to provide him with every requisite for the mission, declared there was more trouble in persuading him to accept a few religious books and warm garments, absolutely necessary for himself and his companions, than in satisfying the most exorbitant demands of others. When urged to take with him at least one servant, for the dignity of his office if not for his personal convenience, he declined."

We have touching accounts of the long voyage round the Cape and the services held on the ship. "Very speedily he won the goodwill of all on board by kindly actions and ready sympathy. He was found, now closeted with the Viceroy over high schemes of government and reform, or holding brilliant discussions upon questions of scholarship or theology with the gentlemen of his suite; now sharing the labour and the confidence of some forlorn cabin-boy, soothing the murmurs of some neglected veteran, or planning blameless amusements for the crew. He declined the luxuries of the Governor's table, and

lived upon the simple fare offered him as alms. In the same spirit he converted the little cabin appointed to his use into a general infirmary, where he would bring, in his arms or on his shoulders, those smitten with any disease, however loathsome, and lay them on his own bed, with more than a brother's care."

The voyage took more than a year, as they touched at several places, and Xavier landed at Goa, the Portuguese seat of Government, May 6, 1542. He found religion at its lowest ebb among the settlers, and therefore he opened his crusade by preaching reform to the European Christians. "Order and decorum began to prevail over drunkenness and profligacy. Deeds of flagrant injustice, violence and dishonesty became fewer day by day. The voice of kindness and mercy made itself heard, and the hymn of penitence and thanksgiving was raised once more. Like the surf that beats incessantly round their island city, the words of the preacher assailed the consciences of the mammon-seeking merchants of Goa with the old, ever-pertinent question: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

He is represented as walking through the streets and market-places with a little bell in his hand, crying out: "Send your children, all Christian subjects, your sons and your daughters and your slaves, that they may learn the lessons of holiness and the love of the Lord." The little ones flocked after him, and he led them by hundreds to the church, and related to them, in few and solemn words, the story of the Saviour's love. The warm, youthful imagination seized the loving truths, and words of prayer and praise echoed from infant lips in many a godless household.

Nothing ever moved him to deeper compassion than the forlorn and spiritually destitute condition of the poor pearl-fishers of Cape Comorin, who had been converted, almost first among the people of the Indies, by the Portuguese, then left for years without priests

or teachers, exposed to the hatred and persecution of their infidel neighbours.

Xavier lived like the very poorest of the natives, subsisting on rice and water. Time would fail if I attempted to describe his many wanderings about the Indian Archipelago : how he went "from port to port, guided at times by inspired dreams, driven at times by the force of outward circumstances, at the mercy often of the winds and waves ; but ever intent upon one object, ever busied in clearing a way for gospel truth to the hearts of benighted lands, and of ignorant and misguided men."

Here is an extract from a letter about the island of Gilolo :—" 'Tis a region full of peril to travellers, as the people are savage in the extreme, and are much given to mix poison in the food they offer strangers. The fear of their cruelty has hitherto withheld any priest from extending his ministry to these islanders ; but, beholding the immensity of their wants, with none to teach them any good or to purify them by holy sacraments, I feel myself constrained to strive after their salvation even at the risk of death. I am determined to make my way thither so soon as it be possible, and to face whatever dangers may beset my path. Verily I have put my hope in the Lord, and will, so far as in me lies, prove the words of Jesus : ' Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake, shall find it.' "

" It is related of Xavier, that while celebrating Mass in a hut he had built for the purpose on the sides of the volcano, the mountain threw up wreaths of flame to heaven, and the earth tottered under his feet, and the building shook to its base ; the terrified worshippers fled, but Xavier, standing in meek composure before the rocking altar, deliberately completed the mysterious service."

Often was his life in peril, often did he go through enough to make the stoutest heart quake. But I come to the last mission field which this valiant soldier in

Christ was permitted to visit. It was the country which has been on the lips of all of us of late. It was Japan. It was Xavier from whom Japan first heard the gospel truth. He received in 1547 a call like that which St. Paul received from the men of Macedonia, saying, "Come over and help us." A native of Japan who had wasted the morning of his life in dissipation, at the age of thirty-five was tortured by a wounded conscience, sought comfort in vain from the heathen priests, and finally set out to Malacca to take counsel of the far-famed missionary. Under Xavier's guidance he became a Christian.

Very touching is the language about his projected voyage: "If the Lord permits, we shall set out. Japan is more than thirteen hundred miles from Goa, by the way of Malacca and China. The voyage is said to be so unsafe, on account of sudden storms and hidden reefs as well as pirates, that it is considered fortunate when one of two vessels reaches its destination."

Notwithstanding this he writes: "I am filled with the utmost happiness at the thought of this enterprise, nor could I think it right, were I forewarned of worse perils, to shrink from the labour put before me."

"Xavier reached Japan safely in August 1549, having had a fair wind. But he suffered much because the Chinese captain of their boat would sacrifice to an idol on board ship, notwithstanding all their efforts to convert him from the error of his ways,—and would consult the demon of this idol upon all subjects, even as to whether or no he should safely bring the Saint and his companions to Japan!"

"The people," he says, "we have encountered here surpass in moral qualities all people discovered up to this time. I think there cannot exist a nation superior to the Japanese in natural gifts. Their intelligence is bright and open, and they prefer honour to all other gifts. They are for the most part poor, but poverty dishonours no one. They are marvellously disposed

for all that is good, and listen eagerly to discourses on God and holy things."

During the next two years his patience, his love, his energy, were rewarded by a small community of Christians; and later missionaries found no less than three thousand there.

He was ambitious for further conquests for Christ. He designed to win over nothing less than the great kingdom of China, but sickness seized him. The spirit indeed was willing but the flesh was weak.

"He begged to be again taken to the hut, whence a distant view of China gladdened his eyes. Here he lingered for two weeks, suffering terrible pains from weakness and from fever, but with peace written upon his wasted features. His wandering words were of God and His mercy; sometimes of regret that China was not allowed to hear the gospel from his lips; oftener of grateful thanksgiving to his Saviour for all the mercies vouchsafed to him. Bowing before the will of his Heavenly Father, he accepted all as from His hand, repeating ceaselessly the cry of the leper in the Gospel, 'Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me.'

"On Friday, the 2nd of December, 1552, his earthly toils and projects ceased for ever. The Angel of Death appeared with a summons for which, since death entered the world, no man was ever more triumphantly prepared. Tears burst from his eyes, tears of emotion too great for utterance, and his features were irradiated as with the first beams of approaching glory; he raised himself on his crucifix, and crying, 'In Thee, Lord, is my hope!' he bowed his head and died.

"In the next year the remains of Xavier were brought away, and finally deposited in St. Paul's Church at Goa. He died in the forty-seventh year of his age and the twelfth year of his mission in the East.

"To him belongs the matchless beauty of a human

nature in perfect unison with the divine. No man, however abject his condition, however hateful his crimes, or however disgusting his malady, ever turned to Xavier without learning that there was, at any rate, one human heart that gave him a brother's love. To his eyes, the meanest and the lowest reflected the image of Him whom he followed and adored, nor did he suppose that he could ever serve the Saviour of mankind so acceptably as by ministering to the sorrows of His lost children and recalling them into the way of peace."

"Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,

He hath sufficed me, and He shall suffice ;

Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,

Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ."

F. W. Myers, *St. Paul*.

PART VI

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

SECTION I

ARCHBISHOP LAUD

WILLIAM LAUD¹ was born of a middle-class family—his father was a clothier—at Reading, in 1573, in the parish of St. Lawrence, and his name has been held in honour there. He received his early education at the Grammar School, and in later years he remembered his birthplace. There is an entry in his Diary about the way to do Reading good, for their poor: "This way never came into my thoughts till this night as I was at my prayers." It was the building of an almshouse, and endowing it with lands at Bray. He also purchased the advowson of St. Lawrence, increased its value and gave it to his College, St. John's, at Oxford.

The chief stages in his career were these. He became head of his College, then Chaplain to King James in 1611; Dean of Gloucester five years later; Bishop, successively, of St. David's, Bath and Wells, and London, and finally Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, when he was in a position to carry out his designs for the reformation of the Church. But six years before this, when he became Dean of the Chapel

¹ For this section several authorities have been laid under contribution, the *Lives of Laud*, by Hutton and Benson; *Laud and Priestly Government*, by H. Ball; J. R. Grove, and Wakeman.

Royal, he had dictated his religious policy to Charles I, and from that time they worked hand in hand.

The chief thing we notice is that, besides high dignity in the Church, he also held great State offices ; *e.g.* he was President of the Board of Trade, First Minister of the Crown, Member of the Treasury Commission and of the Foreign Council, also Chancellor of Oxford. His energy was amazing. He not only sketched out schemes for others to fill in, but he carried them out single-handed. He never took a holiday, he was often unwell, but he never quite broke down.

Such was the man who fills such an important place in the history of the English nation and the English Church in the time of James I and Charles I. He accompanied James to Scotland in 1616. That visit sowed the seed of Scottish hatred, which culminated twenty-two years later in the opposition raised by the Scottish Prayer-Book, drawn up by Laud, to be imposed on the Scottish nation.

Both Charles I and Laud erred from a total want of sympathy and foresight. This attempt failed ignominiously. The result was the signing of the Covenant, and that was the spark that kindled rebellion. This is a specimen of Laud's arbitrary and overbearing conduct. It appeared again and again, *e.g.* in his quarrel with his predecessor Abbot, and with Williams, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal; in his curtailing the liberty of the Press, and in his treatment of the Chief Justice Richardson, who had issued an order against the profanation of Sunday, the Puritan feeling of the country setting in the direction of a stricter observance of the day. Strange that the Archbishop should so neglect the signs of the times. He issued a counter-order in favour of Sunday pastimes, and deprived of their posts 420 clergy for not reading it! His great instrument was the Star Chamber. The extreme severity of the times is seen in that Court, in a sentence on Prynne

for libel, to lose both his ears, besides branding and imprisonment. Had Laud wished it he might surely have interfered to moderate this cruel, barbarous treatment.

But his own time of suffering was approaching. We may fully admit that the charge against him of treason, and his impeachment by the Commons, was illegal and unjust ; we allow that his treatment, in his old age, by his gaolers in the Tower, was needlessly severe, and that his execution at last, after being kept in the Tower nearly five years, cannot be justified. Whatever offences he had committed, it was certain that he could do no more mischief. This beheading of Laud when he was more than seventy years old, is a strong proof of the hard temper of the age.

His capacity for work was great, but he was too restless. It is untrue that he had any leaning towards the Pope. He refused to be a Cardinal when the offer was made. His speech on the scaffold and his last prayer are touching, and we may believe sincere. At the last scene as he passed along, though he was reviled by some, he was so far like Christ, "that he reviled not again." Even his chapel at Lambeth, which caused such fierce anger from its painted glass, which Laud had helped to replace with his own hands—the elaborate woodwork of the screen, the silver candlesticks, the pomp of the stately ritual, the rich copes, his feeling for the crucifix, his prejudice for unmarried clergy—we may ask, after all, was there in it much more than has been seen in *any extreme ritualistic church of our time*? To make criminal or capital charges out of these was monstrous. His character was strongly devotional ; it could hardly be hypocritical ; this appears in his Diary—recording deliverance from accidents—and in his dreams, on which he set great store. He stood up also for the rights of the inferior clergy and was popular with them, more so than with the bishops.

And another feature in his character we must never

forget. He was not avaricious. His munificence was princely. He had founded pensions for the poor on entering each living he held. Wherever he was, he built and restored windows, screens and organs. He did so at Reading. He gave over 1,300 MSS. in twelve languages to the University of Oxford, among other bounteous acts founded the Arabic Professorship there, and enlarged and improved the buildings of St. John's College. All this we may fully allow, but we cannot help seeing something of that unerring law, that while it is the merciful who obtain mercy, ordinary men will rejoice over the fall of the stern and severe. The man who pronounced sentence of cruel punishment against Prynne, had to submit, when in prison, to indignities (which nothing indeed could excuse) in having his papers rifled and burned and defaced by his former victims.

What, then, was the essence of Laud's offence? What was the head and front of his fault? To answer this we must ask another question: What was his aim, and how did he try to carry it out?

Puritanism was one broad feature of this period. And Puritanism Laud hated with all his heart. He thought it narrow, he thought it dangerous, he could not tolerate its intolerance. His ideal was a national church, governed by an aristocracy of bishops, having divine right, and closely united with the monarchy. The material greatness of the Church of England, with other national churches in Europe nestling under her shadow, that was his dream: a political organization rather than a society for holy living.

It is painful to speak lightly of one who sealed his principles with his blood, but while we sympathize we see that his conception was a mistaken one.

And then still more so were his methods. Government rule, authority, tradition, those were his sacred words. He appeared, it has been said,¹ to the world

¹ Wakeman, *History of the Church of England* ch. xv.

always as a schoolmaster armed with punishments rather than the leader of a higher system. He tried often to constrain, he took no trouble to persuade. He had few friends besides Strafford and the Duke of Buckingham. He became very unpopular, and all the time he did not know that he was unpopular or understand why he was so. We see lecturers deprived, surplices and ceremonial rigidly enforced, the small pocket Geneva Bibles forbidden, because of some marginal notes; and it never crosses his mind that he is an oppressor or tyrannical. He could not see that the number of Puritan emigrants to America was increasing every year. That was a sign of the times that no wise man would have misread. If he had been rather less aggressive, if he had known at times how to be conciliatory, he might still have maintained Catholic doctrine in ritual and practice, and yet not have been hated and finally put to death. In short he had zeal, but not according to knowledge. It was not so much what he did as *the way* in which he did it that caused such irritation.

We must be careful not to pass too hasty sentence on historical characters. Two things should always be remembered; first, we should judge them at their best and not at their worst; secondly, we should judge them according to the standard of their age and not of our own.

Laud was not ambitious for himself. He did not use his power to gratify luxurious tastes. He chose to use earthly weapons to establish a spiritual kingdom. His methods were not our methods. Perhaps what was at the root of his failure was his censorial, unsympathetic disposition, which from harshness gradually grew into intolerance. The result was that his enemies for a season prevailed. They proscribed the worship of the English Church. The unpopular church of Laud brought about the pulling down of Episcopacy.¹ "The Dissenters when Laud rose to

¹ H. Ball.

power were a mere fraction of the population, but before his fall he had succeeded in separating half the nation from the communion of the English Church." "He was, in fact, the dark and secret force behind the throne that dictated the fatal policy of Charles I's reign." His admirers, on the other hand, say, "Yes! his methods did fail for the time, but his principles triumphed in the end, after the Restoration, and again revived after the eighteenth-century lethargy, in the Oxford Movement." And it is true that Laud, as Gladstone said, was the man who saved the English Church from being bound in the iron fetters of Calvinism. His character was a very mixed one. As one¹ who has written impartially of him says, "To be a hero it is not enough to be true, a man must also be tender. To have no taint of selfish aims is not enough, there must be sympathy extended to others." Laud's ideal was a high one, but it was held in too hard and combative a manner. He never examined the ideals of his opponents. He never learnt to regard life from another point of view than his own!

SECTION II

JEREMY TAYLOR

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 5, 10.

THESE two beatitudes describe the character of Jeremy Taylor.² The blessing of the peace-makers may also be said to have rested on him. He was

¹ A. C. Benson.

² I am indebted for much in this section to Gosse's Jeremy Taylor, in *English Men of Letters* (Macmillan, 1904).

cast in a very different mould from Laud, who was his patron and brought him forward in early life. He was meek, tolerant, a lover of peace. As one¹ who knew him says: "He had devotion enough for a cloister, learning enough for a university, wit enough for a college."

He was born at Cambridge in 1613, was at the Perse Grammar School there seven years, and then went to Caius College. Of the nine years he spent there we know little, but that he made a mark in the pulpit. He then comes under the protection and guidance of Archbishop Laud, who decided that it was "for the advantage of the world that such talents should be afforded better opportunities of study and improvement than a course of constant preaching would allow of." He determined that Taylor should settle at his own University of Oxford. Laud, in his right as Visitor of the college, nominated his *protégé* to the vacant Fellowship at All Souls. He took care not to lose sight of him; he made the young divine his chaplain, and doubtless often summoned him to Lambeth, that he might observe the growth of his mind and strengthen his resolution.

Three years later he was presented to the living of Uppingham. Taylor made Uppingham his principal place of residence for about four years. The quiet of the country life, far from the wordy contests of Oxford, was a great consolation to his spirit. He was now, for the first time, able to cultivate the things that he loved best, the reading of the Scriptures and the contemplative spirit.

But his first trial was now to come, though it seems that he was slow to perceive the gathering storm of cloud. But when his great patron and the mainstay of his fortunes fell, he must have been stricken with alarm. In February 1641 Laud was impeached by Sir Harry Vane; on the 1st of March

¹ His friend George Rust.

he was sent to the Tower; and on the 25th of June he ceased to be Chancellor of Oxford. A little later all his rents and profits as Primate were sequestered. These were fatal dates in the career of Jeremy Taylor. "I am robbed of that which once did bless me," he wrote, and all the house of his hopes must have come crashing about his head.

The troubles of the Civil War (1642-1649) and the three following years form the next stage. Those eleven years were among the most important in Taylor's life. In 1642 he was Chaplain-in-ordinary to the King, and in all probability he joined the troops when the standard was raised close by him at Nottingham.

A new patron now arose to take the place of Laud. Amongst those who joined Charles I at Oxford in November 1642 was Sir Christopher Hatton, a cousin of the great Chancellor. For six or seven years he was a liberal patron and faithful friend to Jeremy Taylor.

By what means Jeremy Taylor became separated from the King's household it is impossible to determine; but we find him with Colonel Charles Gerard when that general was defeated in trying to relieve Cardigan Castle in 1645, and he was among the prisoners captured by the Parliamentarians.

After this he was taken up by Lord Carbery, who was for many years to be his protector and companion. That nobleman belonged to a type of moderate men, few in number, who sympathized with liberty of conscience while deploring the excesses of the fanatics, and who wished to support the King while detesting his obstinacy and ignorance.

The storm of 1645, however, cast Taylor, deprived of books, effects, and means, into "a private corner of the world," as his friend Rust tells us. He took part in teaching in a private school. Here Lord Carbery fell under Taylor's customary spell, welcomed him to Golden Grove, and presently made him his chaplain.

Here he became, for the first time, a free writer and a great master of English. But, at the beginning, his spirits were too far cast down, and his hopes too scattered, to enable him to do more than his ordinary daily business. Gradually this melancholy passed away, and he turned to literary labour.

Here he wrote in 1647 his first great work, *The Liberty of Prophesying*. A word is needed on this title. Prophesying is used in its old original sense of preaching, not foretelling. The discourse opens with a yearning cry for concord. The Oxford attitude, the old Laudian arrogance, have given way to a softer tolerance. Jeremy Taylor has grown gentle and meek in his adversity. It is a stimulating volume. It inspires its readers with enthusiasm.

The book is inspired by the warmest and the most delicate Christian charity, expounded at an hour and in a country where passion had made charity almost appear impossible. Every man must be left free to find out, according to his best lights, what is truth to him. In an age altogether given up to proscription and persecution, Jeremy Taylor lifted his clear voice in proof of "the unreasonableness of prescribing to other men's faith, and the iniquity of persecuting different opinions." What the world has gained in loss of pain is incalculable. There is, perhaps, no man to-day in England who worships, or who worships not, as his conscience bids him, who does not owe a fraction of his peace to Jeremy Taylor.

By the time Taylor's book could reach Charles he was at Caversham under Lord Craven's care, and there he read, no doubt with fervent interest, the new book of his old chaplain. But Charles I could not accept the principle of a free conscience. He expressed his displeasure to his chaplains, and he instructed one of them, Dr. Henry Hammond, who was an old personal friend of Taylor, and had succeeded him in the royal household, to frame a reply. And there were many

attacks of a severer kind made against Taylor's volume.

The next year (1648) was one of much anxiety to Taylor. All South Wales suddenly declared for the King. Cromwell himself went down there and visited Golden Grove. It seemed that the estate of Lord Carbery would be sequestered, but this trouble passed away. On the fatal January 30 of the next year Charles was beheaded. It is often said that on his way to execution he gave Taylor a watch, and two diamonds and a ruby set in a ring. The watch is in the possession of one of his descendants. The relics are genuine, but they must have been given on some other occasion.

After this Taylor remained for some years in his quiet retreat at Golden Grove, cultivating his eloquence, protected from the distractions of the time. Very interesting is the grove of old trees, some of which are said to survive from his time, where he walked and composed. It is to this beautiful valley that we owe his ripest productions, his *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*. Their popularity has been something like that of the *Imitatio*. The latter volume was written when he had suffered two shocks, the death of Lady Carbery, "the tender providence who had shrouded him beneath her wings," and shortly after that of his own wife. The book abounds in some of the most brilliant passages ever written in English prose. Selection is very difficult where all is good, and also from the extreme length of the sentences. Here are two short specimens:—

"All the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs a grave, where we must lay our sins or our

sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise again in a fair or in an intolerable eternity."

"He that would die well must always look for death, every day knocking at the gates of the grave, and then the gates of the grave shall never prevail upon him to do him mischief. This was the advice of all the wise and good men of the world, who, especially in the days and periods of their joys and festivals, chose to throw some ashes into their chalices, some sober remembrances of their fatal period."

His words roll on like organ peals. All the forces of the soul and all its tenderness are stirred. We have not here a cold severe pedant, but a man—a man who has sense and heart, and is a Christian by the development of his whole being.

On the latter part of Taylor's life I will not dwell at length. At Golden Grove there had been a complete repose for brain and nerves. The last thirteen years were mostly years of affliction, with but a few breaks. In two years he lost three sons. His poverty at one time was extreme, and he depended much on friends, especially on John Evelyn. He was imprisoned once in the Tower and next at Chepstow Castle, and possibly a third time, for opinions expressed, which offended the dominant party. He even laboured under the suspicion of heresy, for what he wrote on original sin. He was not the man to cope with these troubles. He had lived too long in shelter to face the rough outer world. We must admit that he was wanting in practical worldly wisdom.

In 1658 he removed to Ireland to a new sphere of labour. Trinity College, Dublin, which he restored, owes him much. But fresh anxiety was in store for him—persecution at the hands of the Presbyterians, and another short imprisonment at Dublin. On the Restoration a change came; he was made Bishop of Down and Connor. From this post he wished to withdraw. His enemies, he says, "use all the arts

they can to take the people's hearts from me, and to make my life uncomfortable and useless to the service of His Majesty and the Church." A stranger and an Englishman, he boldly defied his foes. But he was not able to retire, and he had the additional diocese of Dromore to administer. There he built the cathedral.

The last six years of his life were a succession of difficulties and disputes. He struggled to uphold the Episcopal Church with much zeal and energy. But the English ritual was unpopular with the native Irish. There was a decline of vitality during his last three years, and he died at Lisburn of a fever in 1667, within a few days of completing his fifty-fourth year.

Of his many writings I have only mentioned a few. His mind was a great and lovely one. He wrote books that will live as long as the English language lasts, and will be read wherever it is spoken—"thoughts that breathe and words that burn." He wrote of Holy Living and Holy Dying, but he did much more: he proved each of them by his own example.

We may end with some words of George Rust, who knew him well, who says, imitating Taylor's style—"He is fixed in an orb of glory, and shines among his brethren-stars, that in their several ages gave light to the world, and turned many souls unto righteousness; and we that are left behind, though we can never reach his perfections, must study to imitate his virtues, that we may at last come to sit at his feet in the mansions of glory."

SECTION III

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES was one of the ornaments of the Church in France at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. He is quite a different St. Francis from the St. Francis of about 400 years before, the founder of the Franciscan Order of Friars.

Both of them were holy, good men, earnest and unworldly, but unlike in many ways. The earlier one lived as much as any one ever did out of the world, in extreme poverty. The latter had to live in the world to some extent, for he was a bishop and had to mix with great people, though he did all he could to keep himself away from the world. His life had very little of stirring incident in it. There is very little of fact to relate, but he calls for a place in the roll of saint-like personages in the annals of Christian biography.

I will first give the few events of his life, and then select instances from it of the virtue of humility which specially marks his character.

I. Francis of Sales came of a noble family, his father being a count at Sales, near Annecy in Savoy. The town stands on the edge of a lake, whose transparent, light-blue rippling waters are enclosed by limestone mountains of a purple tint, flecked in parts by snow, and varied with the deep shade of pine woods.

The bland and gracious look of Nature seems to have passed into the very soul of this good bishop, who spent almost all his life among his people, and loved both it and them.

He was born in 1567. His early studies at Paris and at Padua were on rhetoric and philosophy and civil law. He had great prospects, he might have

married a rich heiress, and for a time he gave way to his father's wishes for his advancement, but at last he gained the consent of his father to his being ordained by the Bishop of Geneva, who said that he foresaw the youth would one day be his successor. Among the resolutions made on the day of his ordination were these—(i) Always to approach the Altar in such a spirit as he would wish to have on his death-bed, and before the Judgment of God. (ii) To aim at a perpetual union with Jesus Christ through loving imitation and recollection, so as to be indeed one with Him.

His success in preaching was at once great, and he had personal gifts and graces which added a charm to his words—a commanding stature, dignity of manner, a sweet smile, a voice deep and rich in tone, a gentle demeanour—all this helped to make him one of the most attractive of men. He devoted his whole life to his priestly duties, but was soon called to work in a larger sphere—to carry out a mission in the neighbouring provinces. The object of this was to bring back the people from Calvinism. The city of Geneva had for a long time renounced the authority both of the Duke of Savoy and also of the Bishop. It had become an independent republic, with Calvin as its ruler. When the Duke of Savoy had succeeded in conquering the country, he applied to Francis to bring back the inhabitants to their former religion.

It was a labour of some years, and one of considerable difficulty and even personal danger in the wild snowy mountains. Gradually, however, one leading person after another returned to the Catholic Church. Francis won admiration wherever he went by his unflinching gentleness, preaching to large or small congregations indifferently, meeting all needs, giving away food and clothing, everything but what his actual pressing necessities demanded. After successfully accomplishing this mission, he returned to Annecy, and was made coadjutor to the aged Bishop

of Geneva, *i. e.* something like our suffragan bishops. On his death, six years later, he became Bishop. He prepared himself for his consecration by a close retirement of twenty days' solemn meditation and prayer at his father's Castle of Sales.

He held his bishopric for just twenty years. Very rarely he went into Italy, to Turin and Milan. He visited Dijon and Lyons, was more than once at the Court at Paris, when Henry IV. became strongly attached to him, and was deeply struck by the beauty of his character and the excellences of his addresses. "What I like best in him," the King said, "is that he does not know how to flatter."

A man is known by his friends ; and two other men must be mentioned who were on terms of closest friendship with him : Cardinal Borromeo, and still more Camus, the Bishop of Belley, to whom we owe most of our knowledge of Francis. He continually wrote down his conversations, which made up at last his work on the Spirit of St. Francis. So eager was he in his desire to become acquainted with every minute particle of his friend's way of life, as to adopt means which scarcely seem justifiable ; for instance he caused holes to be bored in the doors or wainscots of the rooms occupied by Francis when visiting him at Belley, in order to observe how he comported himself when alone. Francis *always* (he says) seemed to be conscious of the presence of God.

His labours were incessant, and wore him out. Nothing that concerned the welfare of his people was neglected, whether it was the introduction of the silk-trade at Annecy, the furtherance of education by means of the Sainte Maison, tending those who were the victims of pestilence, or taking such part as was needful in political matters. There was little time for study, but he did at last finish one work, the *Introduction to a Religious Life*.

On Christmas Eve, 1622, he preached for the last time, though extremely weak, at Lyons, and took part

in some other services, and after a solemn preparation (he had always prepared himself for all solemn occasions in his life), he died on Innocents' Day.

"It is toward evening and the day is far spent," were his last words, save that the Name of Jesus hung awhile upon the lips that had so often lovingly named it.

The secret of St. Francis's great power, and of his unruffled calmness, was, that he never allowed himself to be hurried. He always found fault with confusion and hurry, which he said were the capital enemies of all true devotion. "Better to do a little and well, than a great deal imperfectly;" "Soon enough, if well enough;" "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," were words often in his mouth; and he always reprobated the bustling eagerness which seeks to do several things at once. "It is like trying to thread two needles at once," he said; "people who try to do two things at the same time, will not succeed in either."

Here are a few instances from his life of his humility.

(a) Henry IV. offered him the first bishopric vacant in France, and the immediate enjoyment of a large pension. But he said his chief wish was to live and die among his own people. The money he begged to be allowed to leave in the treasury for the Church and the poor.

(b) He declined the honour of being made a Cardinal, which the Pope held out to him.

(c) He refused to buy an episcopal palace, but persisted in having only a hired house.

(d) He disarmed a questioner who asked him whether the Apostles used carriages by referring to St. Philip (Acts viii.), and by telling him that the grand carriage he saw him in was not his own, but the King's, and assuring him that he never had one of his own.

SECTION IV¹

PASCAL

IN the first half of the seventeenth century there was living in France a man who was one of the great ornaments of her literature, but at the same time a saint as well as a genius; a man of God called to a great mission in the field, *not* of action, but of thought. His name was Pascal. He was a man so remarkable in his age that in no mention of religious characters of the period could he be omitted.

This great thinker—this excellent man—who did not live to be forty, seems to have penetrated down to the very roots of man's nature. He sounded its depths; he laid his hand on it here and there, and saw where it was ailing. Very learned, very thoughtful, he could find no place for quiet thought but in a true religion. Till he find that, he has no secure place whereon to stand.

In the view of eternity, and of the awful issues involved in religion, the common life and pursuits of man seemed to him not only frivolous, but criminal. He looked forth, therefore, on this common life with eyes not only of tears but of displeasure. He seemed even at times to derive something of stern satisfaction from its very follies and absurdities. But this is only the temporary mood of the profound moralist, touched to the heart by pangs that he cannot resist. His true view of life is never cynical, but always grave, if bitter, and hopeful, if stern.

Listen to some of his language—on the search after a true religion, and remember that what he says of himself we should in our measure each go

¹ For much of this section I am under obligations to Dean Church's *Sermon on Pascal*, and Tulloch's *Pascal in Foreign Classics for English Readers*.

through for himself; we should do so, if we wish to be able to give an answer for the faith that is in us.

Thus, then, he describes his state almost of despair when he first thinks of human nature and its miserable condition when left to itself:—

“When I see the blindness and the misery of man, when I survey the whole dumb universe, and man without light left to himself and lost as it were in this corner of the universe, not knowing who has placed him here, what he has come to do, what will become of him when he dies, and incapable of any knowledge whatever, I fall into terror, like that of a man who, having been carried in his sleep to an island desert and terrible, should wake up ignorant of his whereabouts, and with no means of escape—and thereupon I wonder how those in so miserable a state do not fall into despair. I see other persons round me of a like nature. I ask them if they are better informed than I am, and they say they are not. And thereupon these miserable wanderers, having looked around them, and seen some objects pleasing to them, have attached themselves to these.

“As for me, I cannot attach myself to them, and, considering how strongly appearances show that there is something else than what is visible to me, I have sought to discover whether this God have not left some impress of himself.

“I see many contrary religions, and consequently all false but one. Each wishes to be believed on its authority, and menaces the unbeliever. I cannot therefore believe it.”¹

What is to be the test?

One mark of the Christian religion, he says, is that it fulfils prophecy, and that is what others cannot do.

For a religion to be true, it must show knowledge

¹ *Les Pensées de Blaise Pascal* (Paris, 1877), vol. i. p. 281.
Translated by C. K. Paul.

of our nature. It must know its greatness and its meanness, and the cause of both.

What religion but the Christian has shown this knowledge?

The true religion teaches our *duties*; it shows us our weakness. What are *the* two sources of all vice, of all going wrong? Are they not *pride* and *idleness*? Some people think too much of their own nature; others, on the other hand, regard it as incurable, hopelessly corrupt. The one abandon themselves to it by cowardice, idleness, the other try to escape it by pride.

The true religion will point out remedies—*e.g.* humility and mortification.

The true religion will recognize both man's misery and his greatness. It will lead to esteem, to seeing, *i. e.*, man's true dignity, what he is capable of. It will lead at the same time to the despising of self.

Again, the note of true religion must be that it obliges man to *love* his God.

No other religion but ours has thus commanded. Ours has done so. It must also take into account man's lust and weakness. Ours does so.

It must apply remedies for these defects. Ours does so. One of these is prayer.

No other religion has asked of God the power to love and obey *Him*.

It points us to the great remedy, the gospel of Christ. It teaches us that by one man all was lost, and the bond broken between God and us, and that by one man the bond has been repaired.

He was born in 1623, at Clermont, in the centre of France, and after some time at Paris and Rouen he lived at Clermont again.

His home had an atmosphere of intellect and religion about it. From the first he showed marvellous precocity, and would know the reason for everything. Without books, by sheer effort of mind,

he worked out mathematical problems, and by sixteen had won a scientific reputation. His severe studies injured his health. For a time he was ordered to give up all mental work, to amuse himself, and, as his sister expresses it, to "set himself on the world." Perhaps this increased his knowledge of human nature.

A dangerous carriage accident, and about the same time a remarkable vision, had disturbed his nerves. A disgust with the world ensued, and in December 1654, after many struggles, he left Paris, and became an inmate of the Abbey Port Royal, one of its "solitaries."

He had before this been associated with a great discovery in physical science. The barometer which we use to-day, though not actually invented by him, was brought to its perfect state, through his study of the weight of the atmosphere and the experiments made on the Puy de Dôme, the mountain near Clermont, the results of which he verified.

But from the time of entering Port Royal he gave up scientific research. Pascal is an illustrious example that the highest genius in mathematics and in science can be united with the humblest Christian piety.

His great controversy with the Jesuits in the "Provincial Letters" is too large a subject to be treated here.

His last years were years of deep suffering. At the early age of thirty-nine he died, in the year 1662—his last words being, "May God never leave me!"

His book, entitled *Thoughts*, is a book of fragments found among Pascal's papers after his death. It belongs to the last years of his short life, years of sickness and untimely decay—the broken words of a dying man, to whom *Truth* was the one supreme thing. It is no doubt a stern book, one of those very few books, it has been said, which no man can read without being awestruck.

We feel in the presence of a great human soul, and one who loved human souls. Take a few passages.

1st. On man—his position here.

"When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the small space which I fill, or ever can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces whereof I know nothing, and which know nothing of me, I am terrified, and I wonder that I am here rather than there, for there is no reason why here rather than there, or now rather than then. Who has set me here?"

2nd. Some thoughts on distraction and diversion.

"Men fancy that were they to gain such and such an office they would then rest with pleasure, and are unaware of the insatiable nature of their desire. They believe they are honestly seeking repose, but they are only seeking agitation.

"They have a secret instinct prompting them to look for diversion and occupation from without, which arises from the sense of their continual pain. They have another secret instinct, a relic of the greatness of our primitive nature, teaching them that happiness indeed consists in rest, and not in turmoil.

"Thus all our life rolls away. We seek repose by resistance to obstacles, and so soon as these are surmounted, repose becomes intolerable. For we think either on the miseries we feel, or on those we fear may come."

3rd. Look at man's littleness, yet how great in one way he is.

"Man is but a reed, weakest in nature, but a reed which thinks. It needs not that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which has slain him, because he knows that he dies, and that the universe has the better of him. The universe knows nothing of this."

4th. We turn from his study of men, and proceed to take a few of his words on Christianity.

"The knowledge of God without that of our wretchedness creates pride. The knowledge of our wretchedness without that of God creates despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the middle way, because in Him we find both God and our wretchedness."

5th. Then as to the Incarnation.

He takes the objection, "It is incredible that God should unite Himself to such a creature.

"This consideration is drawn only from the view of our vileness. But if it be sincere, follow it as far as I have done, and recognize this, that we are in fact so vile as to make us by ourselves incapable of knowing whether His mercy may not render us capable of Him. For I would know how this animal, who is aware of his weakness, has the right to measure the mercy of God and set to it bounds suggested by his fancy. Man knows so little what God is, that he does not even know what himself is, and, troubled with the view of his own state, he boldly declares that God cannot render man capable of communion with Him.

"But I would ask if God demands aught else from him than to know Him and to love Him, and why, since man is by nature capable of love and knowledge, he believes that God cannot make Himself known and loved by him? He certainly knows at least that he is, and that he loves something. Therefore if he see anything in his darkness, and if among the things of earth he find any subject of His love, why, if God impart to him some ray of His essence, should he not be capable of knowing and of loving Him in the manner in which it shall please Him to communicate Himself to us?"

Thus, though I have taken a very few passages from his *Thoughts*, we see by them how Pascal looks at our nature, not mocking at it, not shutting his eyes to traces of good in it. He is not bitter, though he

is grave. And to what does this mighty intellect come round as its conclusion?

The Gospel alone is the key to the enigma of human nature. Christ is the object and centre of all things, in Him alone all contradictions are reconciled.

And Pascal was a Christian, not because he had been taught Christianity, or because his Church claimed his allegiance. No, it is out of the depths of his own spiritual experiences that his faith was born. There must be a free choice of the heart and will, it cannot be forced on any mind, and that is why he is not disturbed by so many rejecting Christ. There is light enough, he says, for those who wish to see.

If men would find God, they must begin by trying to *do* His will. The knowledge of Jesus is the way by which we find at once God and our misery. Without Him, where can we flee? "Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou* hast the words of eternal life."

It is to this central thought that Pascal comes. Religion is born not of science, but of love and faith. There is the enigma of man on the one side, which is otherwise hopeless, and Christ on the other side holding the keys of the enigma in His hand. Pascal's words are the utterance of one who thought passionately as well as deeply. There is in all his writings the breathing movement of a human heart. He is a true lover of mankind.

PART VII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

SECTION I

HOWARD AND WILBERFORCE

IT is the fashion to abuse the eighteenth century in a wholesale manner. Few persons have a good word for it. Montesquieu, who studied the England of that age through keen French eyes, says bluntly: "There is no such thing as religion in England." That, of course, was not true. But that saying of the keen-sighted Frenchman had a dreadful measure of truth in it. Christianity under English skies was never, before or since, so near the death point. "It has somehow come to be taken for granted," wrote Bishop Butler, "that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. . . ."

"There was," says Green, the historian, "open revolt against religion and against churches in both extremes of English society. The poor were ignorant and brutal to a degree impossible now to realize; the rich, to an almost utter disbelief of religion linked a foulness of life now happily almost inconceivable."

This is a terrible indictment. But in passing sentence, as we are apt to do so glibly on this age, we must distinguish. It was not *all* of the same hue; the latter part of it is marked in the spiritual realm by the great revival under John Wesley, and it is mainly the *central* part of the century that has to bear the blame and stigma of lethargy and deadness which has been affixed to it not without reason, for

the first fourteen years were marked by a certain amount of vigorous life.

We cannot shut our eyes to the decline of vitality in the Church under the Hanoverians, as seen in the miserable state of the churches, the discouragement of enthusiasm, the scandal of non-resident bishops—such as Watson of Llandaff—the apathy of the clergy, who did not attempt to be saints themselves or to make saints of others.

Nevertheless there was a stir and a movement in the direction of social reform. The number of the London charities was a surprise to foreigners. The tone of manners became gentler towards the end of the century. Among the chief examples of philanthropy at this time two especially stand out and call for notice. These are Howard and Wilberforce.

John Howard, the greatest of prison reformers, had his attention first called to the condition of prisoners when he was himself captured and imprisoned in France in 1756. His active work dates from 1773. From that time till his death in Cherson in the south of Russia in 1790, his whole life was devoted to this single object. In every part of the United Kingdom, and in all the principal countries on the Continent, did he visit the prisons and expose their abuses.

Howard was very far from being a sentimental reformer. He wished to diminish largely, though not entirely to abolish, capital punishment. Penitentiaries were erected in his lifetime, but it was not until some years after his death that the task of reclaiming and reforming criminals was taken up in earnest.

Another more famous philanthropist was William Wilberforce,¹ a singularly pure, attractive and unselfish character. Wilberforce was born in 1759, at Hull, where his father and grandfather were merchants. As a child his health was delicate. His aunt, a hearer of Whitefield, drew him on to entertain his first serious

¹ Abridged from Julius Lloyd's *History of the English Church in Short Biographical Sketches*. S.P.C.K.

thoughts of religion. At Cambridge his numerous college friends, and even his tutors, persuaded him, that study was mere waste of time for one so accomplished and so rich; and his guardians encouraged him in idle habits. But good prevailed.

While he was at Cambridge he made the friendship of William Pitt, who was about his own age. The fascination of Wilberforce's talents and character exercised a remarkable influence on Pitt. The young Minister, whom others knew as the most reserved and stately of men, laid aside all his austerity in the society of Wilberforce, and overflowed with boyish high spirits. They went together to Paris in the summer of 1783, after the conclusion of the war with France, and became acquainted with several of the personages who took part in the Revolution a few years later. Like other young men of fashion in that day, Wilberforce was attracted to the gaming-table, but one night, having won a large sum, he happened to reflect on the case of those who had been *losers*, and from that time forward he ceased to play. Then in the course of a second visit to the Continent, in company with Isaac Milner, his friend and tutor in boyhood, he underwent a profound spiritual change. The first fruit of this, on his return to England, was to assemble his household for family prayers. It cost him an effort to overcome a fear of ridicule in taking this step; but having taken it, he persevered. He began to regulate his time with great care, keeping a daily account of the number of hours spent in various ways; whether in private study and meditation, in company, or in Parliament. The pains which he took to lead a holier life failed to carry out his intentions thoroughly, and he found in his failure frequent cause for self-reproach. In great distress of mind he went to consult the Rev. John Newton, Rector of St. Mary, Woolnoth, whose ability as a preacher and strange religious experience made him a conspicuous leader of the Evangelical school,

John Newton's encouragement and sympathy were gratefully accepted by Wilberforce, and helped him in the mental struggle through which he passed. To be a Christian statesman was Wilberforce's high and pure ambition.

His first enterprise was an association for the reformation of morals. He called the attention of the Government to the profane neglect of the Lord's Day, the prevalence of swearing, drunkenness, and licentious publications.

Soon after this his mind was aroused to the enormities of the slave trade. Clarkson and others were already in the field agitating for its abolition, but their efforts had made little way until Wilberforce joined them. His abilities, his wealth, his popularity gave promise of success. He obtained as early as 1787 an Act to limit the number of slaves in slave-ships and otherwise to mitigate their sufferings. But the interested opposition of the traders, when fully roused, proved stronger than he anticipated.

Pitt, who had become his friend at Cambridge, Fox, and Burke were all unanimous in their support of the abolition of the slave trade. The patriarch John Wesley, now on the verge of ninety years, encouraged Wilberforce by a few stirring words, among the last he ever wrote: "Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you, who can be against you?"

Thus it came about that the slave trade occupied the larger part of Wilberforce's time and thoughts for twenty years. Meanwhile, however, he was actively engaged in contending against social evils at home.

In 1797 he published his *Practical View of Christianity*, the fruit of anxious meditation and study during many years. The object of this work was to explain to men of the world the difference between nominal Christianity as commonly practised

and the real Christianity of the gospel. The book had immediately a large circulation.

When he died men of all ranks and all parties wept over his grave. For forty-three years he had been conspicuous in the House of Commons. Well had he earned the title which his constituents gave him of the "*Friend of Man*." He had studied peace and upheld a pacific policy at a difficult crisis. His name will ever be associated with the abolition of the slave trade. In 1797 he brought in a Bill to discontinue it within a limited time, but he was frustrated by those who were satisfied with merely regulating it, so as to deprive it of some of its worst features. And thus the eighteenth century passed away with the temporary defeat of Wilberforce's great cause, nor did the victory come till the last year of his life, 1833, when he was able to say, "Thank God that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the abolition of slavery."

SECTION II

WILLIAM LAW

TWO men illustrate the religious life at its highest standard in the eighteenth century, Law and Wesley.

A different type of character from that of Wesley is William Law. He was as saintly and devoted in his life as was John Wesley, though he was not, like him, a great missionary. His life extends from 1686 to 1761. He wrote several theological and philosophical works of importance, and those of his later life brought him the reputation of being a mystic, and what was thought worse of in that age, an enthusiast. But till the middle of the century his fame rested almost entirely upon his *Serious Call to a Devout and*

Holy Life, as indeed it may be said that it is by it that he is chiefly known at the present day. It is a book to be spoken of with the greatest possible respect, but it is not adapted to be a religious guide-book in all its parts, although it is well worthy of its fame. The different demands and phases and complexities of modern life were naturally unknown to its author. Some of its matter is of less value to us than it was, which is but natural when we reflect that it was written 180 years ago. But the great mass of it will remain as a devotional work quite unique and monumental. It has been objected that there is in it too little of the glad tidings, the bright and joyous side of Christianity. But yet there is a certain amount even of humour in it at times. Gibbon called Law "the most agreeable writer on religion of his day." At all events, its skill has won over thousands of readers. There is no weak sentimentality. One feels under the guidance of a strong man. It is a soul-stirring appeal, if ever there was one. At times it reminds us of *The Imitation of Christ*, but yet it is a book not of the cloister and of the Middle Ages. It has to do with the open places of the world, with practical life—with the eighteenth century in which its author lived. It is rather a difficult book either to sum up or to abridge. Though Law was a mystic, there is no unhealthy self-absorption in it, no vagueness or unreality, no indifference to the active business of life. He does not bring forward matters of doctrine very prominently. Not that he was indifferent to them.

What, then, we ask, is his conception of an ideally good man? In what does his more definite Christian view of him consist? The spirit of Christ, the possession of that spirit, that is the great or sole object of his concern. This requires not merely to be received into the heart passively, but also to be studied and cultivated actively, *i. e.* not only through emotional channels, but also ethically and intellectu-

ally. There is nothing finer in Law's character-sketches than that touch in the portrait of Classicus, who "does not think that he has done enough when he has only learnt languages; but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them." And he goes on to apply this. Just so the spirit of devotion, like any other sense, is only to be improved by study and application, and here it is important to notice that he does not mean only devotional observances.

Devotion, with Law, signifies a life given or devoted to God. Prayers, whether private or public, are particular parts or instances of devotion. The central principle of Law's *Serious Call* is perhaps nowhere more clearly stated than in the following passage—

"The Christian's great conquest over the world is all contained in the mystery of Christ on the Cross. . . . The state of Christianity implies nothing else but absolute conformity to that spirit which Christ showed in the mysterious sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross. Every man therefore is only so far a Christian as he partakes of this spirit of Christ. . . . To have a true idea of Christianity we must not consider our blessed Lord as suffering in our stead, but as our representative, acting in our name, and with such particular merit as to make our joining with Him acceptable unto God . . . we are to suffer, to be crucified, to die, and rise with Christ; or else His crucifixion, death, and resurrection will profit us nothing. The necessity of this conformity to all that Christ did, and suffered upon our account, is very plain from the whole tenor of Scripture.

"This is the state of separation from the world to which all orders of Christians are called."

This represents his ideal aspiration and endeavour. And this ideal enters into the character-sketches of which so much of Law's book is made up. These

character-sketches are generally very vivid. Let us take one of them which enforces the practice of humility, on which Law lays the greatest stress for the realization of his ideal. It is that of Cæcus, *i. e.* one who is blind.

"Cæcus is a rich man, of good breeding and very fine abilities. He is fond of dress, curious in the smallest matters that can add any ornament to his person. He is haughty and imperious to all his inferiors, is very full of everything that he says or does, and never imagines it possible for such a judgment as his to be mistaken. He can bear no contradiction, and discovers the weakness of your understanding as soon as ever you oppose him. He changes everything in his house, his habit, and his equipage, as often as anything more elegant comes in his way. *Cæcus would have been very religious, but that he always thought he was so.*

"Cæcus no more suspects himself to be proud than he suspects his want of sense. And the reason of it is, because he always finds himself so in love with humility, and so enraged at pride.

"It is very true, Cæcus, you speak sincerely when you say you love humility, and abhor pride. You are no hypocrite, you speak the true sentiments of your mind ; but then take this along with you, Cæcus, that you only love humility, and hate pride, in other people. You never once in your life thought of any other humility, or of any other pride, than that which you have seen in other people.

"The case of Cæcus is a common case ; many people live in all the instances of pride, and indulge every vanity that can enter into their minds, and yet never suspect themselves to be governed by pride and vanity, because they know how much they dislike proud people, and how mightily they are pleased with humility and modesty, wherever they find them. Reckon yourself only so far humble as you impose every instance of humility upon yourself, and never

call for it in other people—so far an enemy to pride as you never spare it in yourself, nor ever censure it in other persons.”

The description of Ouranios (heavenly), though it is more directly addressed to the country clergy, must win others to appreciate and follow the beauty of holiness—

“At his first coming to this little village . . . he thought his parish was too full of poor and mean people, that were none of them fit for the conversation of a gentleman. This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept much at home, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body when he was just in the midst of one of Homer’s battles. . . . But now he cannot only converse with, but gladly attend and wait upon, the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the weak and the infirm, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people wherever he can find them, and desires to be used as the servant of all.”

In much of this we see the character and career of William Law himself.

The right use of wealth is illustrated by his two exquisite portraits of two maiden sisters—

“Flavia is very orthodox, she talks warmly against heretics and schismatics, is generally at church, and often at the Sacrament. If any one asks Flavia to do something in charity, if she likes the person who makes the proposal, or happens to be in a right temper, she will toss him half-a-crown or a crown, and tell him if he knew what a long milliner’s bill she had just received he would think it a great deal for her to give. She is very positive that all poor people are cheats and liars, and will say anything to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways. You would think Flavia had the tenderest conscience in the world, if you were to see how scrupulous and apprehensive she is of giving amiss. She would be a miracle of piety if she was

but half so careful of her soul as she is of her body. The rising of a pimple in her face, the sting of a gnat, will make her keep her room two or three days, and she thinks they are very rash people that do not take care of things in time."

From the still more elaborate picture of the other sister, Miranda, I select a few sentences—

"To relate her charity would be to relate the history of every day for twenty years; for so long has all her fortune been spent that way. 'It may be,' says Miranda, 'that I may often give to those that do not deserve it, or that will make an ill use of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of the divine goodness? Does not God make His sun to rise on the evil and on the good? Besides, where has Scripture made merit the rule or assurance of charity? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to His own great goodness . . . shall I use a measure towards my brother which I pray God never to use towards me?'"

This book is indeed a mirror in which all may find themselves; but something far better than that—they will find the men and women they were meant to be.

More than any other book except the Bible it contributed to the revival of religion. It is very popular in America.

Many testimonies as to its influence on individuals might be given. Here is what three of Law's contemporaries thought of it, all of them outstanding men of mark—

(1) John Wesley says he took it for two years as a model for his preaching, and says it is hardly to be excelled in the English language for beauty of expression or for justness and depth of thought.

(2) Gibbon says his precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel. His satire is sharp, but it is drawn from the knowledge of human life. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader's mind he will soon kindle it to a flame.

And, lastly, Dr. Johnson's opinion of it is well known.

"When at Oxford," he says, "I took it up expecting to find it a dull book, as such books generally are, but I found Law quite an overmatch for me, and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest about religion."

The larger part of the *Serious Call* is taken up with the subject of devotion in the popular sense of the word, *i.e.* acts of prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

Law's stated hours of devotion are but the canonical hours of the Church. Praise and thanksgiving is to be the subject of our first prayers in the morning. At 9, humility should occupy our thoughts. At 12, universal love and intercession, as an exercise of that inward love, is recommended. At 3, our subject should be resignation to the Divine pleasure. At 6, examination and confession. Lastly, before retiring to bed, the most proper subject for our prayers is death, for which every day should be a preparation.

That is the mere skeleton and outline of his rules ; but he enforces them by a wonderful variety of most impressive exhortations. By pithy reasons he insists on the necessity of improving our forms of prayer, enlarging and varying them, suiting them to the particular conditions of our lives and the state of our hearts. He shows how this will increase our spiritual devotion.

Next he speaks thus of the value of proper words—

Mundanus (one of his characters), when he sees a book of devotion, passes it by, as he does a spelling-book, because he remembers that he learnt to pray so many years ago, under his mother, when he learnt to spell. His devotion remains in just the same state it was when he was six years old. He has gone on all his life long praying in exactly the same manner as when he was a child!

"When you begin your petitions, use such various expressions of the attributes of God as may make you most sensible of the greatness and power of the Divine nature.

"Begin, therefore, in words like these: 'O Being of all beings, Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and angels, whose universal Spirit is everywhere present, giving life, and light, and joy, to all angels in heaven, and all creatures upon earth.'

"For these representations of the Divine attributes, which show us in some degree the Majesty and greatness of God, are excellent means of raising our hearts into lively acts of worship and adoration.

"What is the reason that most people are so much affected with this petition in the Burial Service of our Church: 'Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death'? It is because the joining together of so many great expressions gives such a description of the greatness of the Divine Majesty as naturally affects every sensible mind.

"Although, therefore, prayer does not consist in fine words, or studied expressions; yet as words speak to the soul, as they have a certain power of raising thoughts in the soul, so those words which speak of God in the highest manner, which most fully express the power and presence of God, which raise thoughts in the soul most suitable to the greatness and providence of God, are the most useful and most edifying in our prayers."

And again on frequency and importunity in prayer—

"And although the bare number and repetition of our prayers is of little value, yet since prayer, rightly and attentively performed, is the most natural means of amending and purifying our hearts; since importunity and frequency in prayer is as much pressed

upon us by Scripture as prayer itself: we may be sure that, when we are frequent and importunate in our prayers, we are taking the best means of obtaining the highest benefits of a devout life.

And, on the other hand, they who through negligence, laziness, or any other indulgence, render themselves either unable or uninclined to observe rules and hours of devotion, we may be sure that they deprive themselves of those graces and blessings which an exact and fervent devotion procures from God."

And now let us ask what manner of man the author was. The book holds up to us a very high standard of life. But did he act up to it himself? It is possible, we know, to sketch out in the study a beautiful ideal. It is easy, comparatively speaking, to urge men to amend. But who has not preached, and who has practised? We are able to say of William Law that he *did* carry out in action, in his daily life, the lessons that he laid down for others. The life which he recommended he lived himself to the very letter, and it was very different from the easy-going life of the eighteenth century. His whole character was a singularly taking one—moral, intellectual, and social.

He was a thorough man, with infirmities of course, but a robust and grand specimen of humanity. He was born in 1686 at King's Cliffe, in Northamptonshire, where some of his name and lineage, I believe, still reside. His father was a grocer. Of his boyhood nothing seems to be recorded, but at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he went in 1703, he was a diligent student, and became Fellow of his College, and was ordained in 1711. But the tenure of his Fellowship was short, as he would not disguise his opinions as a Non-juror, and when Queen Anne ascended the throne he at once refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new Government, and abjure the Pretender's claims to the succession. He gave

up his Fellowship, not without a sigh ; his prospects were dreary, but he had obeyed his conscience. He lived in obscurity and in somewhat straitened circumstances for several years, and wrote some books at this period of his life of a rather stern and austere type, on which we need not dwell.

About the year 1727, when he was forty-one, he became resident tutor in the house of Edward Gibbon, grandfather of the historian, at Putney, and two years later accompanied his pupil, the father of the historian, to his old College, Emmanuel. The author of *The Decline and Fall* testifies to his character, as that of one who believed all he professed and practised all he enjoined. Law's life at Putney lasted twelve years, and while there he was busy with his pen, and acted as a sort of spiritual director to the family, and to many earnest men who had been struck by his practical treatises. He had full liberty to receive his friends, and was always accessible. Though he inspired some with fear, he always had a select circle of admirers and friends.

Among these last were the two brothers, John and Charles Wesley. Law says—"I was at one time a kind of oracle with Mr. Wesley." Naturally, the ardent piety, the vigorous common-sense, the outspokenness and very bluntness of the man would commend him to the father of Methodism, though their relations to each other were not always harmonious.

On the death of Mr. Gibbon, and the breaking up of the establishment at Putney, Law withdrew to his native village of King's Cliffe. He was now fifty-three. For three years he lived alone. A plan was carried out between him and two ladies—Miss Hester Gibbon, aunt of Edward Gibbon, and a Mrs. Hutcheson, a wealthy widow, to live together in a retired religious life of charity. Their great wish was to carry out minutely the precepts of the *Serious Call*, under William Law as spiritual director and chaplain.

Here he had already founded a school for the education and clothing of fourteen poor girls. And here he passed the last twenty years of his life. His call was thus not only what he had meant to do, but what he did himself, carrying out his rules of early rising, his love of sacred music, his interest in education. We need not go into details. It is enough to say that for a literal fulfilment of the Sermon on the Mount, that quiet, regular life was without a parallel in the eighteenth century. It was rather similar to the life at Little Gidding, under Nicholas Ferrar, in the seventeenth century.

There was, perhaps, in his methods some reckless and indiscriminate giving, but there were no reformatories or labour-farms in those days. There was no charity organization to correct his mistakes. And the best of the modern millionaires, some of whom give largely to hospitals, libraries and other public institutions, might do well to remember the *proportion* observed in that household between private expenditure and charity. One tenth only of what they had did that trio spend on their simple personal wants ; the remaining nine-tenths went to the poor.

In that calm atmosphere, as like that of heaven as it is possible for us to conceive, his days passed uneventfully. He was passionately fond of music. No day passed without reading something of the mystics' literature. A great amount of theological writing went on, and if it was controversial, there was in everything Law wrote consideration for his opponents' feelings, and no word of bitterness escaped him. He would always have men turn from the dust of debate to the green pastures of God's love, His infinite, unalterable, overflowing love.

In many respects, by no means in all, he agrees with the Quakers. Unquestionably he was one of the most important instruments in the great revival of religion in the eighteenth century, but neither the Methodists nor the Evangelicals can claim him as

their spiritual father. His position among Churchmen was unique and may perhaps be briefly thus described. There was always much of the High Churchman about him, and not a little of the Broad Churchman.

The last words he wrote, only a few days before he died, in his address to the clergy, were Christ's words : "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*"

His vigour remained to the last unimpaired. His eye was still piercing, and not dim, neither was his natural force abated. He had always lived most temperately, and yet not so abstemiously as to injure health. He had no inward misgivings, and if any man ever had, he had "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." He had few cares, and he bore like a Christian the criticism and even abuse with which he was assailed for being a mystic. He breathed his last shortly after Easter Day, April 9, 1761. We may call him one of the greatest and best of his day, a saintly character, with a life passed in comparative obscurity. Others may have been as original in genius, others of as brilliant talents and as self-denying lives, as he ; but very few, if any, of his contemporaries, united all these excellences in one person, as did William Law.

SECTION III

JOHN WESLEY¹

"Necessity is laid upon me, for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."—I Cor. ix. 16.

THE long life of Wesley (1703-1791) fills nearly the whole of the eighteenth century. He did not reflect his century. He wrought it into a new pattern. A spiritual force, a spiritual impulse—that was what his time wanted, and that he gave it. In this lies the secret of his work.

He was brought up in the Rectory of Epworth, in the fenland of Lincolnshire, one of a very large family, all of them marked by more than ordinary moral earnestness, poor, and content on a little.

After being at school at the Charterhouse, and having shown much intellectual promise, he went to Christ Church, Oxford. Two books contributed most to the formation of his religious ideas: the *Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, and the *Holy Living* of Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

Law's *Serious Call* also influenced him profoundly at this stage of his spiritual development. After serious reflection, he was ordained, and went to assist his father as curate.

Returning to Oxford, where he held a Fellowship at Lincoln College, he found a little society formed by his younger brother Charles, with few undergraduate companions, for united prayer and spiritual exercises. They lived by rule, observing strict frugality and temperance, and receiving the Lord's Supper once a week.

It was there that his brother Charles first won the sneering nickname of Methodist. Whitefield joined them, and animated them with fresh zeal. Wesley's

¹ Based on the latest life of Wesley, by Fitchett (Smith & Elder,) 1906.

first enterprise was boldly conceived, but carried out with deplorable want of judgment. He crossed the Atlantic, and attempted to evangelize the newly formed colony of Georgia. At this period of his life he might be described as a High Church Puritan or as a Puritan High Churchman. His ascetic habits and his inclination to domineer over others made him highly obnoxious to the colonists: and he succeeded no better with the Indians. He came back to England after an absence of two years; and on his return attached himself closely to the Moravian settlers whose mystic piety impressed him, and eagerly drank in their doctrines. "*I went to America,*" he says, "*to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me?*"

He had not yet found peace of conscience. Mysticism had failed. Ritualism had failed. May 24, 1738, was for him the great day of deliverance, the day of his conversion, as he called it. In the little gathering in Aldersgate Street, as Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans was being read, he says, "I felt my heart strangely warmed: I felt I did trust in Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

It was through the teaching of the Moravian Bohler that Wesley says he discovered the three great truths: (1) that salvation is through Christ's atonement alone, and not through our own works; (2) that its sole condition is faith; and (3) that it is attested to the spiritual consciousness by the Holy Spirit.

His first step after his conversion was to visit the settlement of the Moravians in Germany, at Herrnhut. He afterwards borrowed from the Moravian society several regulations, such as the meeting together weekly in bands or classes, for mutual confession and intercessory prayer.

The story of his first week's work is a striking

expression of zeal. He reached London on Saturday night, September 16, preached four times on Sunday, met the little Moravian society, which now numbered thirty-two persons, on Monday; on Tuesday he visited the condemned felons at Newgate, and preached in the evening at Aldersgate Street. All the days of the week were, in fact, filled up with preaching and private visitations. And at last Wesley has somehow found the key to the human heart. His speech now brings peace to those consciences it formerly could only disquiet.

But now this disturbing energy of Wesley's speech, for hearers who asked only to be let alone, began to provoke active opposition. The churches were shut against him, the Bishops frowned on the movement. Before the end of 1738 he was little better than an ecclesiastical outcast.

I have not space to dwell upon his two great comrades, his brother Charles and Whitefield. It has been said that Whitefield was the orator, John Wesley the statesman, and Charles Wesley the singer of the great religious movement of the eighteenth century. But they cannot be so precisely labelled and marked off.

It was at Kingswood, near Bristol, that the power of Methodism to stir the mass of the people began to be felt in its full extent. There was something overwhelming in the very spectacle of the multitudes who often gathered to hear; twenty thousand or more closely wedged together in four thousand yards square, all moved, as it were, by a magnetic impulse, the motion flying as lightning from one end of the vast concourse to the other; thousands in tears; or, in calmer moments, none moving head or hand.

Wesley's supreme instrument was preaching. He used other forces; he built schools, he organized societies, he published books, he waged great controversies, he was tireless in correspondence and

conversation. But his supreme instrument for influence was preaching.

What was the secret of Wesley's power as a preacher? In many respects it might be imagined that he was the last man to sway an eighteenth-century crowd. He was a scholar by training, a man of fine and almost fastidious taste, with an Englishman's dislike of emotion, and a High Churchman's hatred of irregularity. He had little imagination, and no descriptive power. He told no anecdotes, as a rule, and certainly fired off no jests. There was something in him—in his look, in the cadences of his voice, in his solemn and transparent earnestness—which brought irresistibly home to those who looked on him and listened to him, a sense of eternal things. The truth is, Wesley saw and had the power to make others see, the close relation in which the human soul stands to God. As one of his hearers said, "he spoke to them like an inhabitant of another world."

The area of his labours widened. He went north and made no less than twenty-one tours in Scotland. He crossed St. George's Channel forty-two times, and put the impress of his strong personality and ardent zeal on Ireland. His work spread across the Atlantic. No field could well be less promising than that offered by the United States of that day, and yet Methodism from the first grew with marvellous rapidity on American soil.

This amazing strenuous life went on almost to his very last day. Wesley's skill in directing, sustaining, and regulating the enthusiasm which he had aroused was such as no man has ever surpassed. By classes, by local societies, by circuits and districts, under the general administration of a Conference, of which he was the president, the strictest discipline in detail was carried out under one central government.

Then his dearest friends and relations died.

For thirty years before his death Wesley stood as lonely as an Alpine peak ; he was not merely without rivals, but almost without comrades, and he had no visible successor. Everything centred in him and depended on him.

In 1773 he writes in his journal—

“I am seventy-three years old, and far abler to preach than I was at twenty-three. What natural means has God used to produce so wonderful an effect? First, continual exercise and change of air; second, rising at four every morning; third, the ability to sleep at will; lastly, evenness of temper. I feel and grieve, but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing.”

In 1784 Wesley was in Scotland in wild weather, and beaten upon by the bitter moor winds. He records that he walked twelve miles without a sense of fatigue, and he was *eighty-one* years of age!

It was not till he was eighty-five that he began to note signs of decaying strength. Four months before Wesley's death, one who heard him preach at Colchester describes how a minister stood on each side of him, and the two held him up, having their hands under his arms.

The last scene is well known. When he could preach no longer, could write no longer, nor even think and pray any longer, he could still *sing*—

“I'll praise my Maker while I've breath.”

His trembling voice failed at the “while,” but he tried again, “I'll praise—I'll praise——”

A short time before, he had lifted his hand like a soldier exulting in the moment of victory, and cried, “*The best of all is, God is with us.*”

Wesley's boast, “*I look upon all the world as my parish,*” was hardly an exaggeration. He preached

42,400 sermons after his return from Georgia. He had the glowing and tireless zeal of a preaching friar of the Middle Ages. In fact, Wakeman calls him the St. Francis of the eighteenth century, a remarkable statement, coming from such a High Church writer, though he adds, "He was not a St. Francis in his humility, his self-discipline, or his obedience."

Wesley had to face not merely stormy skies and weary, interminable journeys, he had to endure an amazing amount of obloquy and public abuse. The England of the latter half of the eighteenth century was brutal and untaught. Its temper was cruel; its very sports were marked by an almost incredible savagery. He was pelted by the crowds, sneered at by the educated, frowned on by the clergy. How did he do all he did? He wrote, he read, he corresponded, he preached. He was always in the saddle or in the pulpit—and he was never in a hurry! What was his secret?

The truth is, his toils as a preacher were interspaced with frequent islets of leisure. This man, who seemed to live in crowds, had yet in his life wide spaces of solitude. He preached to his early congregation, then mounted his horse or stepped into his chaise, and rode or drove off to the next gathering. Between the two crowds he had hours of solitude. He was the master of the perilous art of reading on horseback. His serenity of temper, which no care could darken and no anxiety disturb, is nothing less than wonderful.

Then look at his power of administering and organizing. It seems incredible that, even with all his indefatigable energy, he could personally visit his principal societies. In this work of organization Wesley displayed consummate ability.

For more than fifty years he was the greatest personal force in England. He quickened its conscience and its zeal in all the great movements that were beginning. He was sometimes in advance of

the sentiments of his age, *e.g.* on slavery. The spiritual impulses given by him reformed our prisons, and taught clemency to our penal laws. It has been well said that "England escaped a political revolution like the French one because she had undergone a spiritual revolution" (Maurice). He restored Christianity to its place as a living force in the lives of individuals, and in the life of the nation.

He was wont to say he could do nothing, or almost nothing, with the rich, the learned, the respectable, the moral. There were no half-lights, no half-shades in his preaching. A fundamental part of his teaching was the utter depravity of human nature. But at the same time he thoroughly rejected Whitefield's Calvinism.

I come now to what must be regarded as the great blot on Wesley's name, or at least his most serious mistake. I mean the separation from the English Church, in which he was an ordained minister, and to which he had been profoundly attached. Nothing can be stronger than some of his language; *e.g.* "I simply teach the plain old religion of the Church of England." In 1787 he says, "*When the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them.*" In 1729, "*Be Church of England men still.*" In 1790, the year before his death, he says, "*I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England.*" His latest biographer admits that he laid himself open to a charge of inconsistency. The influence of his brother Charles was a force always pulling him in one direction, so that at intervals he still talked like a High Churchman. How, then, is the separation explained? How came he to do such an act as sending Dr. Coke to America with power to ordain clergy?

Expedience is the only word that will explain his contradictory acts and words. The logic of facts, of the spread of his followers and their needs in his sight were too much for him. In America, where

there were no parish ministers, he felt he was invading no man's right. Wesley held separation to be expedient. Whether it was lawful or not, he declined to say. He himself never formally left the Church of England. But he had persuaded himself that to set up a rival ministry to that of the Church was not separation. His followers saw things differently. Wesley died in 1791. In 1795 the preachers were authorized to administer the Lord's Supper, and separation was finally accomplished. It was quickly followed by internal dissensions, and at the present day nineteen different forms of Methodism are publicly registered. How utterly unnecessary all these divisions are! How impossible to explain minute differences betwixt a Wesleyan Methodist, a Primitive Methodist, a Bible Christian, or a United Free Methodist! This is admitted by one of the best biographers of Wesley, the president of the Methodist Church of Australia.

After all is said, we must acknowledge that few in such an active life up to extreme old age have ever shown such evenness of temper as Wesley, or such power to attract. He cannot be held blameless for the divisions which have been the result of his work, but if we take into account his circumstances and his time, he deserves praise for evangelizing, as he did, the neglected masses, and for accomplishing a great and needful revival. Two results are specially due to him, a heartier use of psalmody in public worship, and an awakened interest in foreign missions.

Wakeman, a High Church historian, and one not at all naturally disposed in his favour, pays this tribute to him. "John Wesley," he says, "must always stand out in English Church History as the greatest religious figure in the eighteenth century."

"He may be truly said to have changed the face of the religious world. As he grew older he grew more charitable and more considerate, though not perhaps wiser. But rather than criticize further the imperfections of this eminent servant of God, let us think of

his purity, his disinterestedness, his love of the poor, his willingness to take up the Cross and follow Christ. Consider what a great thing this is that a man's thoughts should be wholly turned, not on himself, but on God, and that all his powers should be devoted to the good of his fellow-men!"¹

¹ Jowett, *Biographical Sermons*, 1899.

EPILOGUE

THUS we have passed through the long gallery of Christian Lives, from St. Paul to Wesley, from the first century to the end of the eighteenth, which is almost within measurable distance of our own, for I have myself met one¹ who when a lad heard Wesley preach one of his last sermons. Some striking character has stood out bringing his special message or contribution to the building of Christ's Church, in each of them, with the exception of the third, and it would have been easy to include Origen and Cyprian, had the present volume been intended to be exhaustive instead of representative. In each can be traced a steady advance. Not that centuries are more than arbitrary divisions: but they form convenient landmarks, and it is often useful to compare their beginning with their end.

As there are many mansions, Christ has told us, in His Father's House, so are there many approaches to it, many paths in the upward journey. Many varying types of character will be found there. There is no rigid cast-iron uniformity in the Revelation of God in Christ, meeting as it does the wants of all ages, all circumstances, all characters, while preserving throughout the continuity of the Christian Spirit. This Spirit is reflected "in many portions and in diverse manners" in this assemblage of saints and heroes, martyrs and missionaries, philosophers and soldiers. We have in Augustine the defender of Christian

¹ The late Henry Crabbe Robinson.

doctrine, the leader of Latin theology, the asserter of Divine Grace, God's free gift, as superior to any power of the human will, however intense, in leading man to his Redeemer. We have in Athanasius the champion of the doctrine of the Trinity, to the defence of which "he consecrated every moment and every faculty of his being." In St. Jerome's monumental work of the Vulgate we see the first instance of Biblical scholarship. Many centuries later, in Wiclif awoke the wish to give the pure Word of God to the people, not in the Latin version, but in their own vernacular tongue. Still later came heralds of the New Learning, the Martyr Tyndal, and Erasmus, the man of peace, to whom—though he was very far from having anything of the spirit of the martyr—a great debt is due for his edition of the New Testament, and for throwing life and meaning by his Paraphrases into what had become a dead letter mechanically repeated. In St. Bernard we have a type of personal influence powerfully acting on rulers and nations; and in the group of fourteenth-century writers, Tauler, Thomas à Kempis and the unknown author of the *Theologia Germanica* we note the surrender of the will, the direct appeal to God, the union with the Deity that characterizes the mystics of that period. The seventeenth century gives us the large-minded toleration of Jeremy Taylor, the clear, piercing intellect of Pascal, and an example of unworldliness in high places, in St. Francis of Sales. Even in the case of one in whose character there are less pleasing features, who was hard and unsympathetic like Laud, we must do justice to the zeal which preserved the historic links between the Anglican Church and primitive Christianity, to whom the ancient collects and service-books were the very breath of life, who saved the Church of England from Calvinism.

And so down all the centuries we may see how many an individual life has leavened the Christian

body, and brought forth fruits worthy of its Founder. That there will be no break in the continuity of Divine Guidance and Love none can doubt: and even a brief and rapid survey such as is here attempted is enough to hearten trust in the Power which has watched over Christianity so long, has brought it safe through periods of danger, of gloom and stagnation, and has raised up a goodly fellowship to hand on the torch from age to age. For all the Unknown Future, pregnant with vast issues, difficult problems and inevitable changes, the old earnest prayer must still be breathed, LUX ESTO PERPETUA.

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